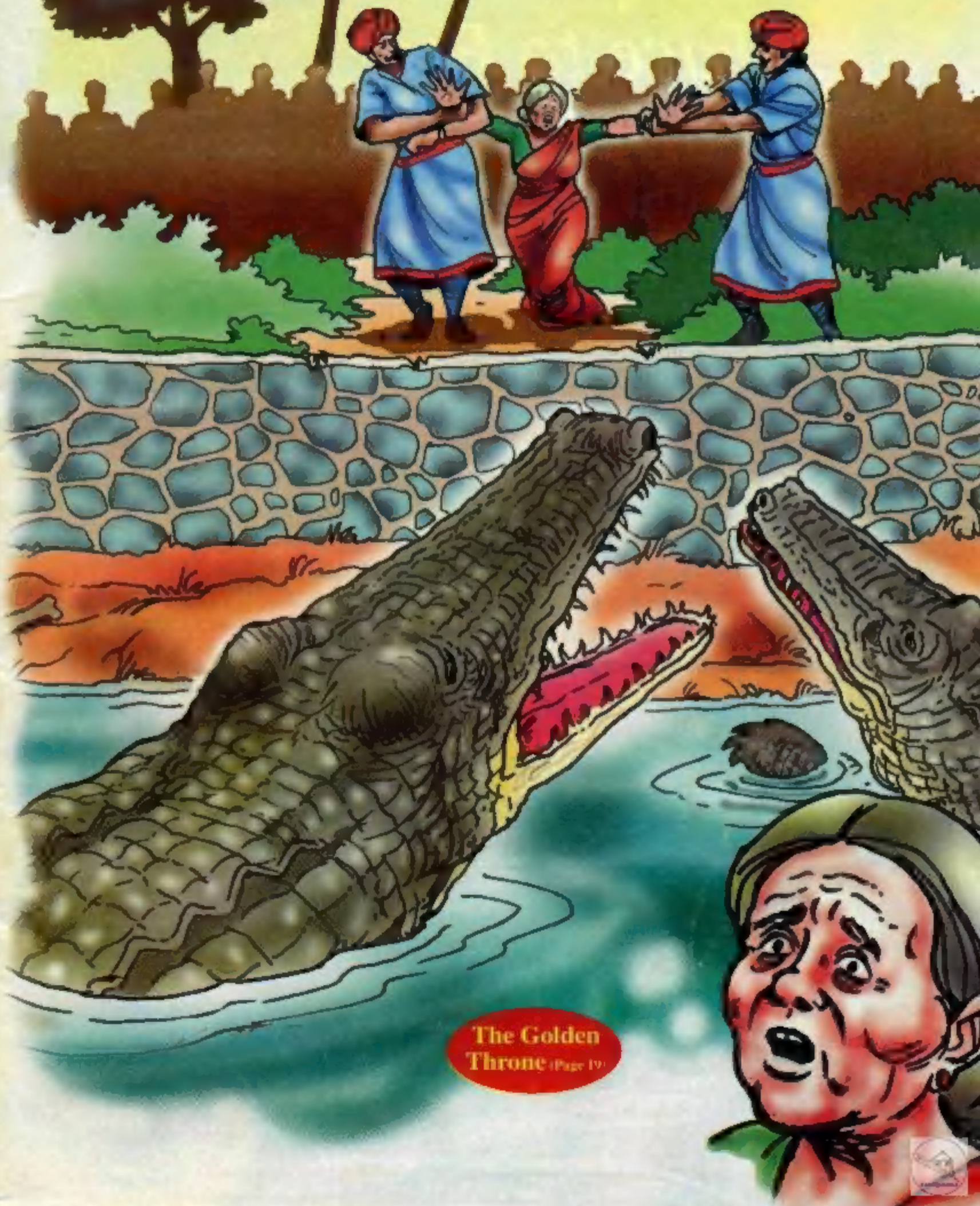


October 2000 - Rs. 10



CHANDAMAMA



The Golden
Throne (Page 19)



Face to Face with Nature



CHILIKA - the hopping, singing and flying nursery for children. This lazy and dreamy Chilika lake dwells in the East Coast of Orissa. When in Chilika, you are in nature's class-room, being taught the alphabets of nature. "This is a dolphin" and "That is a heron" - a live picture book for kids. Parents take note: Open the eyes of your children to this special page of ever-gathering beauty. Chilika is the wintering ground for migratory birds. Colours and varied shapes shall tickle the imagination of young minds. In boats, one can go exploring little fairylands - the exciting islands. Water sports add to the existing excitement for kids and men with young hearts. In the middle of this clear, dark blue lake stands the famous 'Kalijai temple'. The story of Kalijai will chase tender hearts like a dream. Capture the talkative beauty and bounty of the gorgeous Chilika in your dead film reels and immortalise the moments of fleeting beauty in the hearts of your young ones.



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NATURATA



CHANDAMAMA

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HIGHLIGHTS



Saga
of
Vishnu



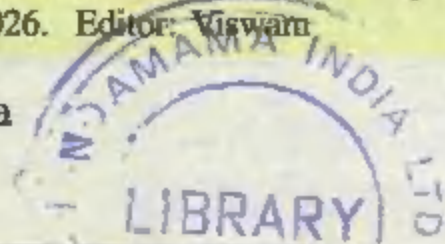
Saga of India

The Golden
Throne



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Errata :

Bob Beamon was the first **long jumper** to break the 28-feet barrier.
The record was **not** made in high jump, as was inadvertently mentioned
as answer to Question 9 of Olympic Quiz in our September 2000
issue.





Founded by

B. Nagi Reddi and Chakrapani

LET US TRUST INDIA'S DESTINY

From Coimbatore to Kashmir, terrorism has taken a heavy toll of so many innocent lives. The process continues. To combat terrorism and to prevent its macabre dance of death, the nation has to spend huge amounts of money and deploy man-power. A great deal of the attention of the people in authority had to be diverted from better works to formulate strategies against these heinous plotters. Even then, no complete prevention is possible, because to perform an act of treachery is easy. Courage is necessary for an open confrontation; intelligence is necessary for winning somebody over to one's point of view. But any coward can leave a bomb or hurl it at a meeting or a market place or a public transport.

By now it is well-known that terrorism in India is being financed and managed by forces from abroad. They do not wish to see India live and prosper in peace. India has passed through many trials and she will pass this phase of her life, too. What is necessary for us is to have trust in her destiny. It was in India that the quest for the very meaning of life had begun at the dawn of civilization. The world has been richer by the profound truths which radiated from India. The world will be further richer when, at a peaceful time, it will turn to the still secret discoveries of India.

Meanwhile, we must inspire all our friends through our own conviction that India cannot be cowed down by such threats. Our courage and faith will be the strongest answer to the hostile forces.



Newsflash

COMMEMORATING END OF WAR



When the Second World War broke out in 1939, the Soviet Union (USSR) was on the side of the Axis powers - mainly Germany, Italy, and Japan. The Allies led by Britain, France, and the USA suffered initial losses on most of the fronts. After Germany, under the Nazi leader Herr Hitler, annexed countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia, he made an unsuccessful attempt to overrun Soviet Russia, which then joined the Allies, resulting in a turn in the tide for them. The leaders of Britain (Winston Churchill), USA (Harry S. Truman), and the Soviet Union (Joseph Stalin) met at a historic summit which marked the end of the War. The Russian Central Bank recently issued a 100 Rouble coin which depicts the meeting of the three leaders. Only 500 numbers of the coin have been minted, and so they are really unique and priceless.

EFFECT FIRST, CAUSE LATER

Till recently, light was supposed to travel faster than anything else. Its speed was calculated at 186,000 miles per second. This belief has now to be changed, because a U.S. scientist - Dr. Wang of the NEC Research Institute - has proved that light pulses can be speeded up 300 times! In simple terms, light can reach earth even before it leaves its source! A basic principle in Physics has to be rewritten : no longer does cause come earlier than effect. Einstein's theory of Relativity also stands breached!



THE MISSING EXCLAMATION

A letter addressed to the Russian President had *two* errors. One, there was no exclamation after "Esteemed Vladimir Putin"; two, the line inviting the leader to the school leavers' dance, "You will have a good time, we will feed you pies" had the word 'you' without a capital 'Y'. The President's officials were horrified; they advised him not to attend the dance! They also found out who had written the letter. It was Anna Provorova (17); but she had not signed it as she had written it on behalf of the school leavers. However, the officials took the lapse seriously and recommended withholding of the silver medal and downgrading of Anna's marks in the final exam. Her school has now appealed to the head of the state himself to intervene and restore the marks and the medal to the girl.



NOT A SPELLING ERROR!

Bradsen was really Bradman — no, not the legendary cricketer, Sir Donald Bradman, but his son. For nearly 30 years, John suffixed Bradsen to his name to escape public attention. He told reporters recently that he had adopted an unassuming surname as he was afraid of the "glass cage" around him resulting from the adoration his famous father received from his admirers and the general public. The Australian sporting hero, Sir Donald, was the other day being honoured. He was named the Australian Hall of Fame's "Male Athlete of the Century". The son represented the father at the ceremony, and when his name was called, he stood up and was formally announced as John Bradman, for the first time after 1972. He had shied away from publicity all along.



HAPPY DIWALI!

It's Diwali time again. **Chandamama** wishes all its young readers a very happy and fun-filled Diwali. Here's hoping this festival season sees your eyes shine like sparklers and your smiles light up the Diwali night with their radiance.

You must all be busy planning out your celebrations, preparing a list of items to buy, sweets you'd like to eat and all that. Well, here's one more list to add to that: a list of do's and don'ts to make this Diwali a happy and safe festival.

Here's the first list - a list of things to do:

- ✓ When you burst crackers, make sure that adults are around.
- ✓ Wear slippers while bursting crackers. Never skip around barefoot on roads or you may step on sizzling hot used crackers. That can be quite painful.
- ✓ Use *agarbathi* sticks rather than matchsticks for igniting crackers.
- ✓ Used crackers must be piled away neatly in corners and not scattered all around. Pour water to cool them down fast.
- ✓ Keep a bucket of water handy.
- ✓ Be conscious of your surroundings. The rockets and crackers you let off must not cause fires in thatched hutments or godowns close by. Your fun must not cause misery to others.

And here's your next list – of things NOT to do.

- ✗ Do not burst crackers using match sticks. Instead use sparklers or *agarbathis*.
- ✗ Don't throw lighted crackers around. Instead Place them on the ground before igniting them.
- ✗ Do not wear nylon or synthetic clothes while playing with crackers. These are highly inflammable. Remember to wear only cotton clothes.
- ✗ Don't light crackers inside the house. Always burst crackers in the open.
- ✗ Do not light crackers in the vicinity of open fuse boxes or transformers or any other electrical gadgets. You may cause a fire.
- ✗ Don't burst crackers near parked vehicles or places where inflammable things like kerosene, petrol and diesel are kept.
- ✗ Never bend down and light crackers. Instead stand straight and bend only your hand. You can avoid eye and face injuries.

Have a great Diwalil



FIRST AID FOR BURN INJURIES

Some kinds of accidents are common during Diwali. Fire accidents, for instance. These can cause burn injuries, which can be quite painful. God forbid, but in case you injure yourself while playing with crackers, here's what you must do.

Do wash the area of injury with cold or running water. Keep pouring water until the burning sensation and irritation stops. Do not use ice-cold water.

In case of burn injuries in the chest and abdomen, do not try to remove the dress that you are wearing. This might cause more agony. Instead, sponge that area with water.

Remove articles like bracelet, rings, and chains, which might further cause pain when it touches the injured part.

Do not apply oil or greasy creams on the injury as this will make cleaning and dressing the wound rather difficult.

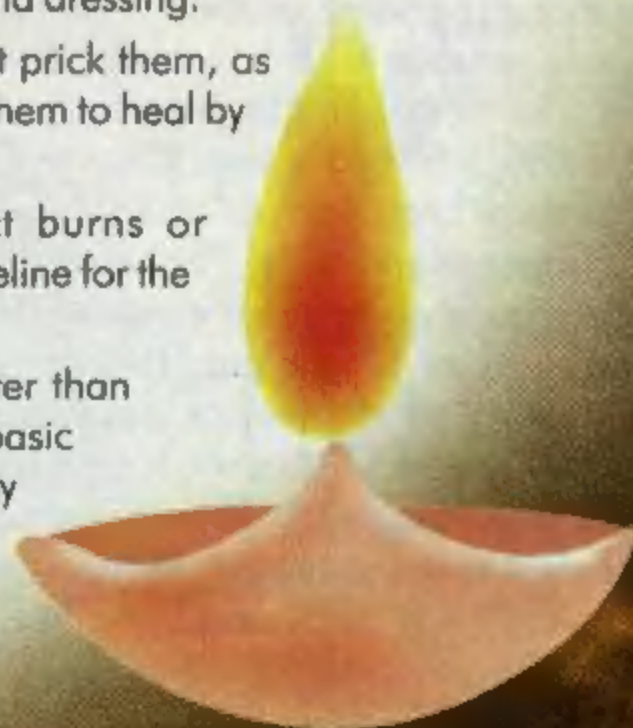
In case sparks from a cracker fall into your eye, wash the eye thoroughly until the irritation subsides.

Superficial and small burn injuries may not require dressing. Apply antiseptic cream. But larger burn injuries need proper cleaning and dressing.

Leave blisters intact. Do not prick them, as this will lead to infection. Allow them to heal by themselves.

Above all, never neglect burns or postpone treatment. Make a beeline for the family doctor immediately.

However, prevention is better than cure. And if you follow some basic prudent rules and adopt apt safety measures while playing with crackers, your Diwali will be incident-free. Once again, happy Diwali!



BORN THIS MONTH

Born on 2nd October 1869 in Porbandar, a feudatory state in those days, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi. His father, Karamchand or Kaba Gandhi, was the Chief Minister of the Raja of Porbandar. Later, he held the same post at the court of the ruler of Rajkot.

Mohandas was sent to London to study law when he was eighteen. After three years, he returned to India as a barrister-at-law. By then he had been married to Kasturba.

In 1892 Gandhiji moved to South Africa which was a British colony, like India. It was there that he had the bitter experience of the inhuman attitude with which the White rulers treated their unfortunate subjects. Once, though he had a First Class ticket, he was literally thrown out of his railway compartment simply because an Englishman who got into it would not like an Indian to travel with him. Determined to fight this kind of primitive injustice, he even sacrificed his lucrative legal career and led a movement to win the legitimate rights for Indians in that part of the world. His success was noteworthy.

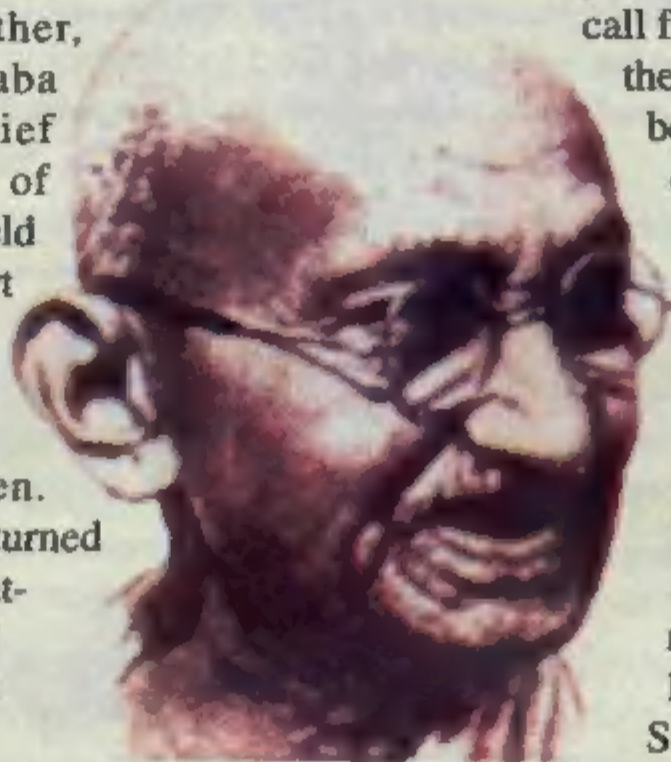
In 1914 he returned to India. By then his fame had already spread across the country. Four years later he organized the peasants of Champaran, in Bihar, to offer

a non-violent resistance to the oppression by the foreign indigo-planters. In 1919 occurred the massacre of innocent people at Jallianwala Bagh in Punjab. The extent to which the brutality of the British masters could go was established beyond doubt. Gandhiji gave the call for non-cooperation with the British. Within a year, he became the supreme leader of the national movement.

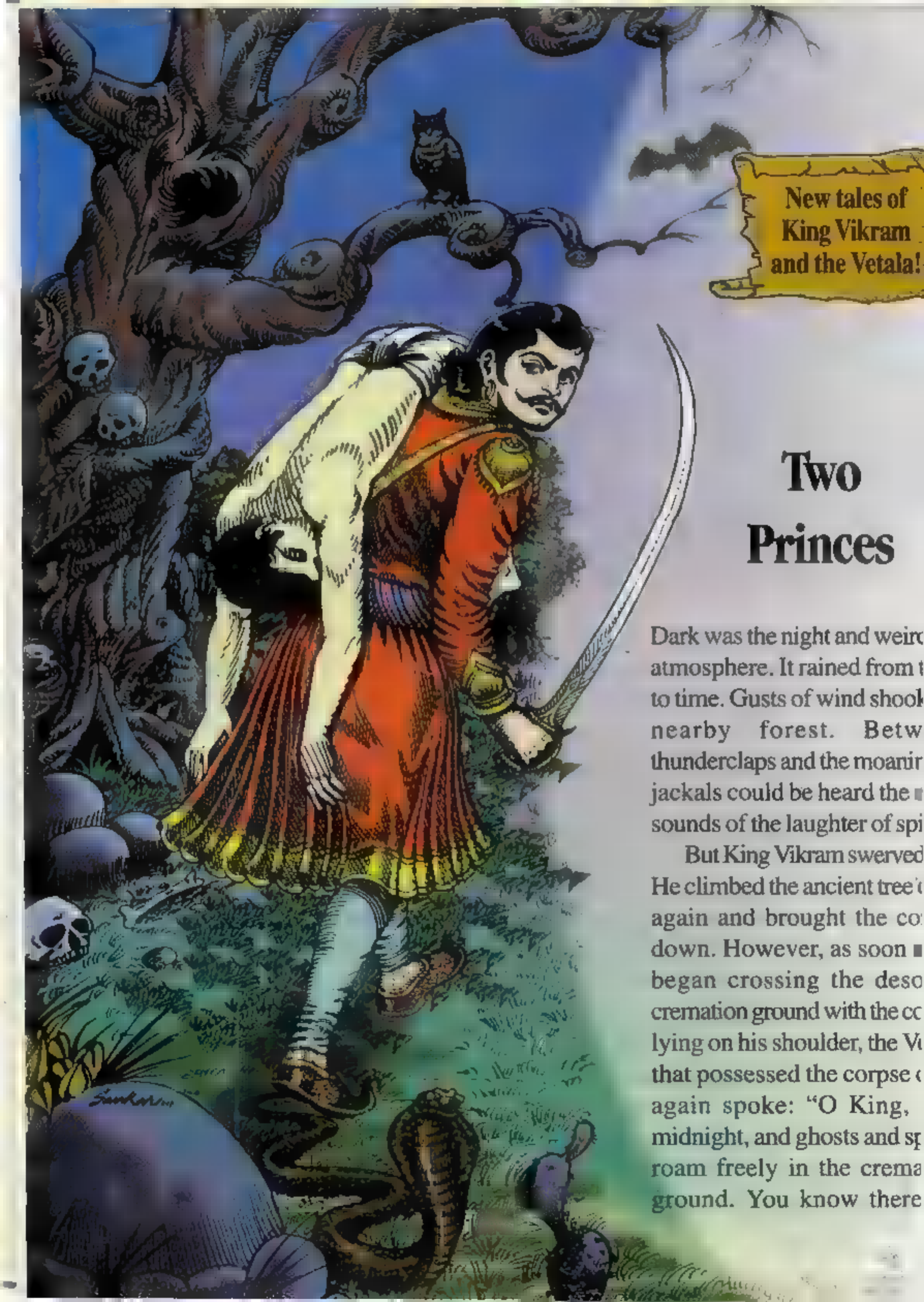
He devoted the next phase of his life to reform the social life of India, to make the poor self-sufficient through means such as the spinning wheel, and to remove untouchability. In 1930, he marched from Sabarmati to Dandi on the sea, to encourage the poor to make salt from the seawater without having to pay tax to the Government. From then on, till India

became free, Gandhiji led agitation after agitation and courted imprisonment time and again. His political mission climaxed in 1942 when, on the 9th of August, he gave a call to the British to quit India.

The British realized that they would have to leave India sooner or later. The country won freedom on the 15th of August 1947, but at the cost of division into India and Pakistan. Some people believed that the division had come about because of some of the policies of Gandhiji who wished to appease a particular community. One such man shot him dead on the 30th of January 1948. The people of India revere him as the Father of the Nation.



**MAHATMA
GANDHI**

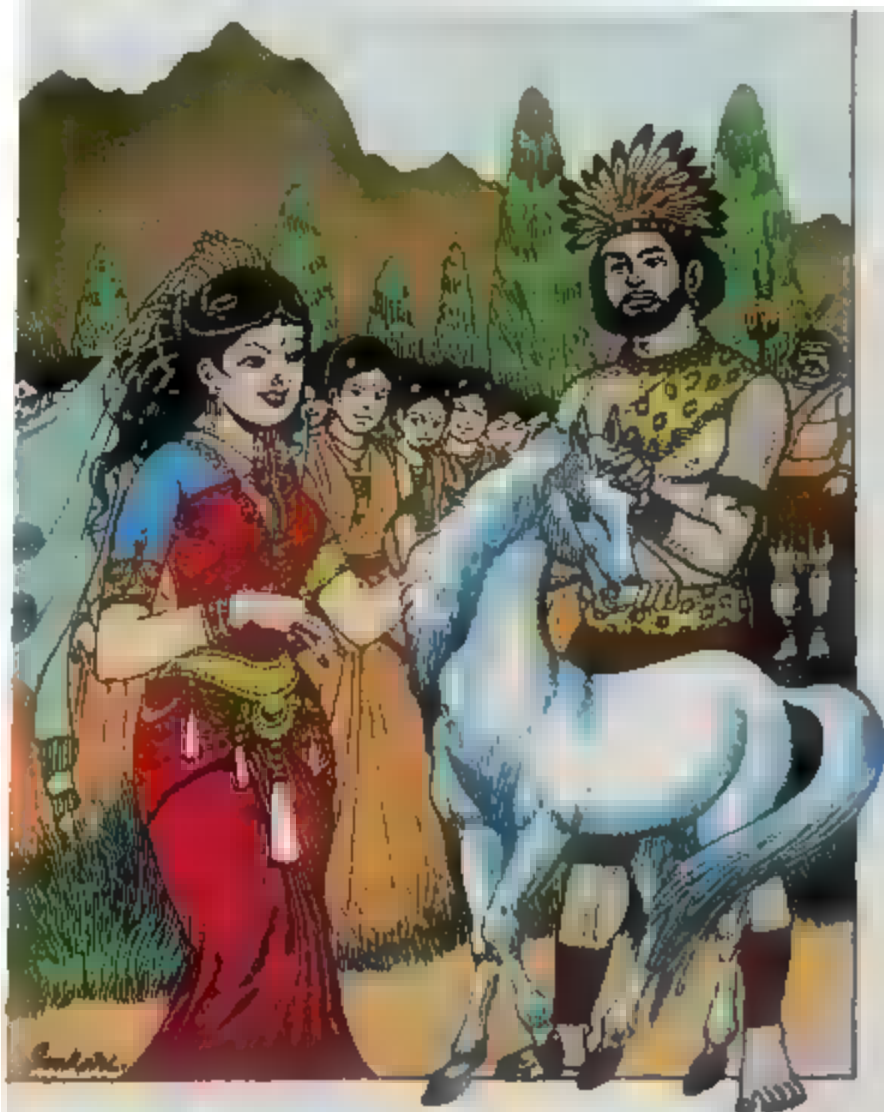


New tales of
King Vikram
and the Vetala!

Two Princes

Dark was the night and weird atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the nearby forest. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the sounds of the laughter of spirits.

But King Vikram swerved. He climbed the ancient tree's branches again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the Vetala that possessed the corpse once again spoke: "O King, at midnight, and ghosts and spirits roam freely in the cremation ground. You know there



blood-thirsty wild animals also present here. Heaven knows what danger lurks in the dark. Yet I find you're not at all afraid and don't veer from your intent. I feel there's some life or death reason for your conduct. I shall tell you about two fearless but stubborn princes. Like you, they were driven by noble principles and were selfless. Unfortunately, one day they were so wrapped up in selfish feelings that they behaved completely contrary to their principles. Their efforts at sticking to their principles were wasted in a day. I'm afraid you may find yourself in the same position. As your friend and well-wisher, I feel I should tell you their story so that you can avoid similar pitfalls."

The Vetala then began his narration:

Chandanpur and Pranayapuri were two neighbouring kingdoms. Their rulers paid tribute to the King of Prachandagiri. Chandradatta of Chandanpur had a daughter called Jayanti. She was as clever as she was beautiful. She was brought up like a prince and learnt all the arts a Kshatriya prince was expected to know. She was now grown up and her beauty and accomplishments had no match.

One day, Jayanti went out with her friends on a picnic to the forests nearby. The head of the Bhil tribe, who lived in the forest, welcomed her and gave her a lovely little white foal. The princess was thrilled with the gift. She took the foal with her and sheltered it in a comfortable stable. She herself looked after the animal. She fed, bathed and groomed him every day. In a few years, he grew into a big, handsome, and healthy horse. The princess, who had by now learnt to ride, would gallop at the speed of wind all over the grounds and the forest. It was the fastest horse in the royal stable.

In the meantime, the villagers near the forest complained to the King of Prachandagiri that wild elephants were destroying their crops. They said if the elephants were not stopped immediately, the entire crop would be destroyed and there would be famine in the land.

The king at once sent his son Rudraketu with a few soldiers to the

jungle to stop the elephant menace. At dusk, some soldiers lit huge torches and others beat large drums. When the elephants were disturbed, they first ran towards the village, where they were attacked by a shower of arrows. Alarmed by this unusual happening, they ran away deep into the forest and did not come back.

After he had dealt with the elephants, Rudraketu decided to visit King Chandradatta as he was close to Chandanpur. The king welcomed Rudraketu warmly and did all he could to make his stay comfortable. Rudraketu saw Princess Jayanti in the royal garden and was carried away by her beauty and fell in love with her. Then, as he strolled in the garden with the king, he saw the white horse. "That is a lovely horse!" he exclaimed to the king. "I would like to possess it."

Jayanti was passing by just then. "Please take the horse as a small gift from me," she said.

The Navratri festival was due to take place a few weeks after this incident. The prince of Pranaypuri, Vaibhav Varma, came to invite Chandradatta and his family to the festivities in his kingdom. He had a reason for coming personally with the invitation. It was common knowledge that Jayanti and he were in love with each other and he had come to meet her.

That evening when Jayanti met



Vaibhav, she told him about Rudraketu and his strange request. Of course, she had given her horse to him, but still was smarting at his blatant request and complained quite bitterly about his arrogance.

"Well, what can we really do?" asked Vaibhav and advised Jayanti to forget the whole incident.

The next day, Prince Vaibhav Varma went back to his kingdom. An old temple was being renovated at Pranaypuri. While a wall was being broken down, a beautiful sapphire was found. Vaibhav and his father King Virasena decided that they would set it on a crown and offer it to the deity in the temple during the Navratri festival.

Rudraketu got to hear of the

discovery of the jewel through his spies. He sent word to King Virasena that he would soon be crowned emperor very soon. He said he would greatly appreciate if he were presented with the gem to wear it on his crown at the coronation.

The peremptory request from the crown prince annoyed King Virasena. He wondered how he could avoid giving the gem to Rudraketu. But he could not think of a way to do this without offending the prince. Seeing him agitated, Vaibhav told his father: "You needn't be upset over this. We were planning to offer the gem to the Devi. What's the harm in giving it to the crown prince? It may ultimately benefit our people."

Vaibhav went to Prachandagiri and

presented the gem to Rudraketu. A week later, the Navratri festival began at Pranaypuri. King Chandradatta, his queen, and Jayanti came to Pranaypuri for the festival. On the last day of the festival, Crown Prince Rudraketu, too, came to Pranaypuri. He was welcomed with great respect and show.

The next day during the final puja, Vaibhav filled a golden urn with *haldi*, *kumkum*, and sandal paste and sprinkled the fragrant mixture on Jayanti.

"How dare you!" exclaimed Jayanti, pretending to be angry. She then snatched the urn from his hands and chased Vaibhav. Rudraketu, sitting nearby, burnt with jealousy. He realised that there was more than mere friendship between Jayanti and Vaibhav. He was not used to being thwarted whenever he had set his heart on something. He felt that if he delayed speaking out his mind, he would only lose Jayanti. So he got up hastily, went up to Chandradatta, and said impetuously: "On the second day of the new moon in the month of Kritika, I'm going to be crowned the Emperor. I would like to make your daughter Jayanti my queen, on that auspicious occasion. I hope you won't have any objection to my proposal."

Both Chandradatta and Virasena, sitting next to each other, were dumbstruck and looked uneasy. They had not expected this from Rudraketu and did not know what to say to that



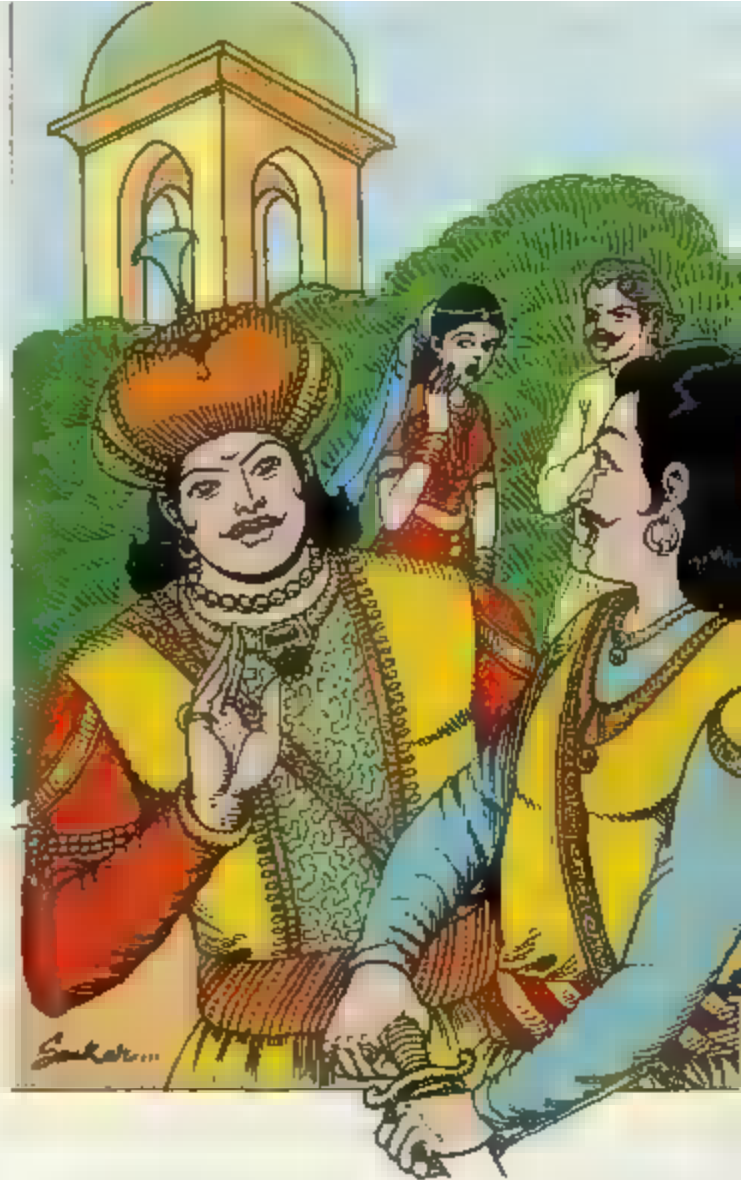
headstrong young man. Sensing the reason behind Chandradatta's silence, Rudraketu said rather rudely: "If you don't wish your daughter to marry me, please be frank. But I must tell you that I always get what I want."

Hearing his raised voice, Jayanti and Vaibhav looked around and found Chandradatta looking upset and helpless. Rudraketu noticing that he had Jayanti's attention, now addressed her: "I wonder what the matter is," he said sarcastically. "Any father would be only too happy to get a request for his daughter's hand from the heir to ■ empire. However, your father is agitated by the proposal and is speechless with awe."

Jayanti immediately answered: "You must forgive me, Prince, but I find myself unable to accept your proposal. You see, I've already chosen my husband."

Rudraketu felt very humiliated. He said: "Vaibhav Varma is only an underling's son. I shall take my father's permission and declare war on these two kingdoms. Then your Vaibhav Varma will not be able to escape the noose and you'll have to accept me."

Vaibhav could not stand it anymore and he interrupted Rudraketu and said: "There's no need for such anger or excitement, Crown Prince. The elders in the family have given us permission to get married and we're not doing anything wrong. It's against *dharma* to wage a war on our states for personal reasons."



Vaibhav's words incensed Rudraketu even more. "Watch your words!" he cautioned Vaibhav. "Remember whom you are speaking to. It's not the way to speak to the future emperor!" he asked haughtily.

Vaibhav at once put his hand on the hilt of his sword and challenged Rudraketu to a duel. "Let's fight it out like men," he said. "Whoever wins the fight can marry Jayanti. Then there'll be no war that will dishonour our kingdom or destroy our people."

Vaibhav's words silenced Rudraketu. He realised how badly and unwisely he had behaved, and calmed down at once. "Prince of Pranaypuri," he said, "why should there be ■ due between us? You and Jayanti are

engaged and should get married. I hope you both will live happily for a long time. I'm very sorry for the way I behaved. It was really unacceptable."

The Vetala then posed his question to King Vikram. "O King," he said, "Princess Jayanti gave away the white horse that she loved so much to Rudraketu. But she did it reluctantly and regretted having done so. Vaibhav advised her to forget the incident. In the same way, he handed over the precious sapphire without a murmur. It seemed as though he was afraid of Rudraketu and his power. How did such a coward find the courage to challenge Rudraketu? At the same time how do you explain the arrogant braggart Rudraketu's behaviour? He just caved in when Vaibhav challenged him and did not even unsheathe his sword. On the contrary, he inexplicably accepted Vaibhav's marriage to Jayanti. It seems to me that the two princes were selfish and cowardly. They were neither consistent nor stable. If you can explain this riddle,

do so, or else your head will break into a thousand pieces!"

Vikram had a ready answer, ■ usual: "You must judge a person's selfishness, intelligence or conduct according to the context. Both the princes were in love with Jayanti and her beauty, and wanted to marry her. So, you cannot call them selfish. No matter how brave you are, assessing a situation realistically and being able to strategically retreat cannot be called cowardice. Vaibhav drew his sword in defence of his love and because he felt it was a personal matter. He didn't want the people to suffer because of their personal rivalry. Rudraketu, even though belatedly, put the welfare of the kingdom and the safety of the people first. So, he stepped aside and did not fight. This indicates ■ good and mature personality, not a coward."

The Vetala was successful once again in making King Vikram speak, and flew away to the ancient tree along with the corpse. The king drew his sword and went after the vetala.





The Magician's Wish

Vinaysheel was the zamindar of Helapuri. He was ■ generous and kind-hearted man, and looked after the villages in his estate very well. He was also keen about the welfare of his tenant farmers and villagers and, therefore, was ■ popular and ■ well-loved landlord.

One day, he went to the village of Sugandhpuri in his estate. As he was listening to the villagers, a man came up to him and said: "Sir, I'm a magician. I've held shows all over the country and people have praised my shows. I would like to show you some of my tricks. I'm sure you'll enjoy watching them."

"I'm sure we all will love that," said Vinaysheel promptly. "It'll be a welcome change from talking about people's problems."

The magician laid out his things and

started his show. He displayed all kinds of tricks. He drew paper chains out of flat handkerchiefs. He then turned the chains into real live snakes. As the people scattered in fear, the snakes became long twisted ropes that danced in the air. After a while, the ropes stood absolutely straight like wooden sticks. Finally, the magician made his pet birds perch on the ropes and sing. The audience was thrilled ■ this final trick and burst out clapping.

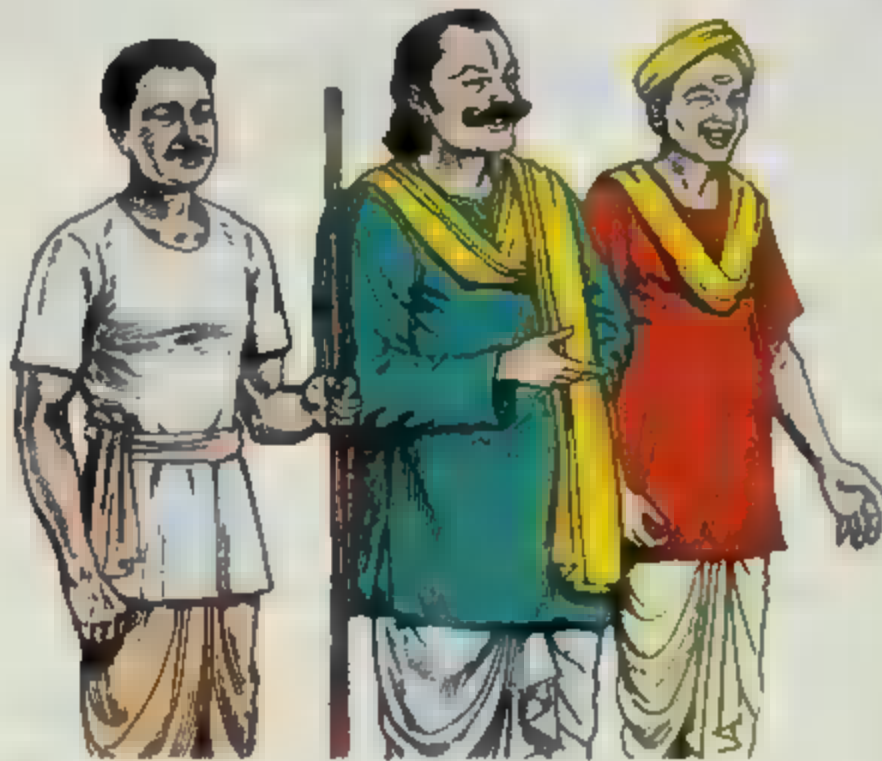
Vinaysheel smiled at the magician. "That was very impressive," he said. "How much would you charge for the show? You can ask for whatever you like."

"Are you sure you will give me whatever I like? You must not disappoint me," countered the magician. The magician's odd words did not strike ■ warning note in the zamindar's mind.

"Try me. I'm not in the habit of going back on my word," Vinaysheel assured him rather haughtily and, as it turned out, quite foolishly.

"Sir," said the magician with a secret smile, "I do not want any money at all. I just have a curious desire to see you without any hair and without a moustache."

Everyone was dumbstruck by the magician's strange request.



As soon as he heard the magician's words, Vinaysheel realised that he had made a terrible mistake. Like all popular people, he had his enemies. Vinaysheel thought that the magician had been sent by some of these people.

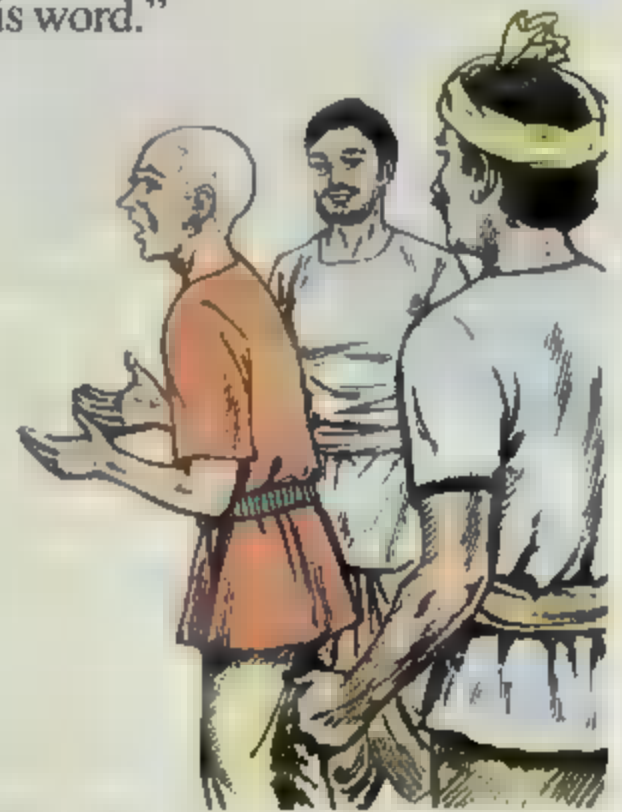
Now he did not know what to do. If he did what the magician asked, he would be laughed at in all his villages. If he refused he would still be scorned for not having the courage to keep his word.

Looking at the zamindar's discomfiture, the magician taunted him. "I shall be very grateful if you would do it quickly. I

have to be in the next village before night-fall."

Vinaysheel, seeing no other way out, said: "I'm willing to give you a thousand silver coins."

"No, sir," the magician said adamantly. "If you can't give me what I had asked for, say so and I shall go away. But you will be known as the zamindar who didn't keep his word."



At that moment the zamindar's chief adviser, Vishnu Sharma, took the magician aside.

When they came back, the magician had no hair on his head and no moustache. Vishnu Sharma said, cleverly, "Your desire was to see the zamindar without any hair and without a moustache, wasn't it? Well, you don't have any hair or a moustache now! Now you can look at him as long as you wish!"

The whole village laughed at the way the tables had been turned on the magician.



THE GOLDEN THRONE

[The story so far: The golden throne dug out from a pit near the palace in the kingdom of Kaundinya has the figurines of damsels on three steps. As Prince Vijayadatta starts climbing the steps, they assume life and pose riddles which the prince has to answer. He climbs two steps after giving satisfactory answers. The third damsel narrates the story of King Nyaya Vardhana who is well known for his justice. Prince Kumaraketu of the neighbouring kingdom has gone to him to learn law and justice. He sits with the king and listens to the pleadings of, first Swami and Chandra, and then Manikarna and Ratnagupta. The king deals with them in his own inimitable way. Read on..)

King Nyaya Vardhana listened to Manikarna very attentively and without interrupting him. When he finished presenting his plea, the king turned to Ratnagupta.

He at once stood up and bowed, and said in a voice choked with emotion: "What's there for me to say? For the

past thirty years, I have traded honestly. Your Majesty knows the truth of my statement, and so do the traders of this kingdom. You also know how much I have earned. Why should I stoop so low and do something so contemptible and be humiliated like this? I did give him forty thousand rupees for his goods.

10. A SON'S GRIEVANCE



What more can I say? In fact, what more is there to say? A trader from another country is charging me with fraud and is heaping on me all kinds of accusations. What greater shame can I face?"

King Nyaya Vardhana smiled slightly and said: "Even Lord Krishna was called a thief! He was accused of stealing butter! We are ordinary mortals and have to face such things with fortitude and not take them to heart. Tell me, how is your son? You have a son, don't you?"

"He's well, by your grace, your majesty," Ratnagupta said in a low voice.

"Ratnagupta," said the king, "don't

feel so bad that you have been accused in the open court. Go and sit by yourself and think about all that has happened and pray to God. No sin escapes His attention." The guards of the court escorted Ratnagupta away.

The king then turned to Manikarna: "Ratnagupta is an honourable man. You're like a son to him. Don't be worried, and wait for a while here."

Manikarna had no idea what the king's orders meant. He sat down with a puzzled look on his face.

King Nyaya Vardhana then called the third petitioner. He was a young man. He was the only son of an old woman and had some grievance against her. They came from a village a little away from the capital city.

The son presented his plea to the king. "Your majesty," he said, "my wife is a young and innocent woman. I admit she doesn't know much about housework and is perhaps not very efficient, but she is a good woman and has not an ounce of guile in her. Unfortunately, my mother harasses her by scolding her all the time. If she would only talk to her with affection, my wife would willingly do whatever she wants.

"But this old woman not only curses her all the time, but raises her hand. She beats her up at the slightest excuse, and my poor wife has no defence against her.

Her life is ■ misery and she is in tears all the time. I've pointed out to my mother many ■ time that she should not beat an innocent young girl. It's a sin. And she'll go to hell for it. But my mother pays no heed to my words at all.

"Now there is only one choice before me. I want to take my wife away and live somewhere else. We cannot live in the same house with this old woman any longer. But she doesn't allow that either. She threatens to jump into the well if we were to go away. The moment we start on the subject, she runs to the well holding out ■ threat. She wouldn't listen to the village headman either. I complained to him, and he tried to make her see reason, but it has been of no

use. He is the one who quietly put both of us on a bullock cart and brought us here, saying I should seek justice from your majesty."

As soon as her son finished speaking, the old woman burst out in a loud voice: "This is great!" she said. "What's wrong if a mother-in-law beats her daughter-in-law? Where's the need to come to the king's court with such a trifling complaint? I have never seen anything like this! Anyway, I insist that these two should live with me and look after me. If they leave me and go away, I'll jump into the well and take my life. That's my last word!"

The king called two guards and said: "Take this woman and tie her up! Throw



her into the well near the cremation ground at the edge of the town. Gag her so that she can't scream or shout."

The woman and her son were struck speechless by the king's orders. But the old woman recovered almost

who wants to throw me into the well? This is murder!"

The guards finally managed to tie up the old woman and bring her to the king.

The king then addressed her: "You're a foolish and stubborn old woman. Didn't you threaten to jump into the well, so what's wrong if I help you keep your threat? You called me a fraud and said I was hard-hearted. For this crime, I won't throw you into the well but into a pond full of crocodiles." He ordered the guards to carry out his command. The old woman now got really alarmed and started weeping and wailing loudly.

"O king!" she cried. "Please forgive me. Please don't throw me to crocodiles. I'll never again threaten to jump into the well. I won't beat my daughter-in-law ever, never again. Only don't throw me into the pond!"

The king spoke in grave tones: "People like you cannot be forgiven. I'm not going to let you off so easily," he declared.

He instructed the guards to lock her up in jail. He said she should be given only one meal and be beaten once a day. If she were to threaten to jump into the well, she should be thrown into a pond full of crocodiles."

The old woman was led off crying and bemoaning her fate. The son was very upset at what had happened. He



immediately and tried to run away from the guards when they came forward to tie her up, shouting all the while. "Goodness me! What kind of death is this? What kind of a fraud is this so called justice? What a hard-hearted king is this

asked the king with tears in his eyes: "Will you really do all that to my mother?"

The king smiled and said: "No, that was just to frighten her and teach her a lesson so that she won't threaten or trouble you again. You can take her back with you but after a while."

The son left quite happily after that.

The king thereafter called Swami and spoke to him gently: "You must now think hard on the way you have led your life so far. Haven't you envied Chandra for his family's ability to work hard and be successful? Haven't you often cursed the laziness and ineptitude of your own family?"

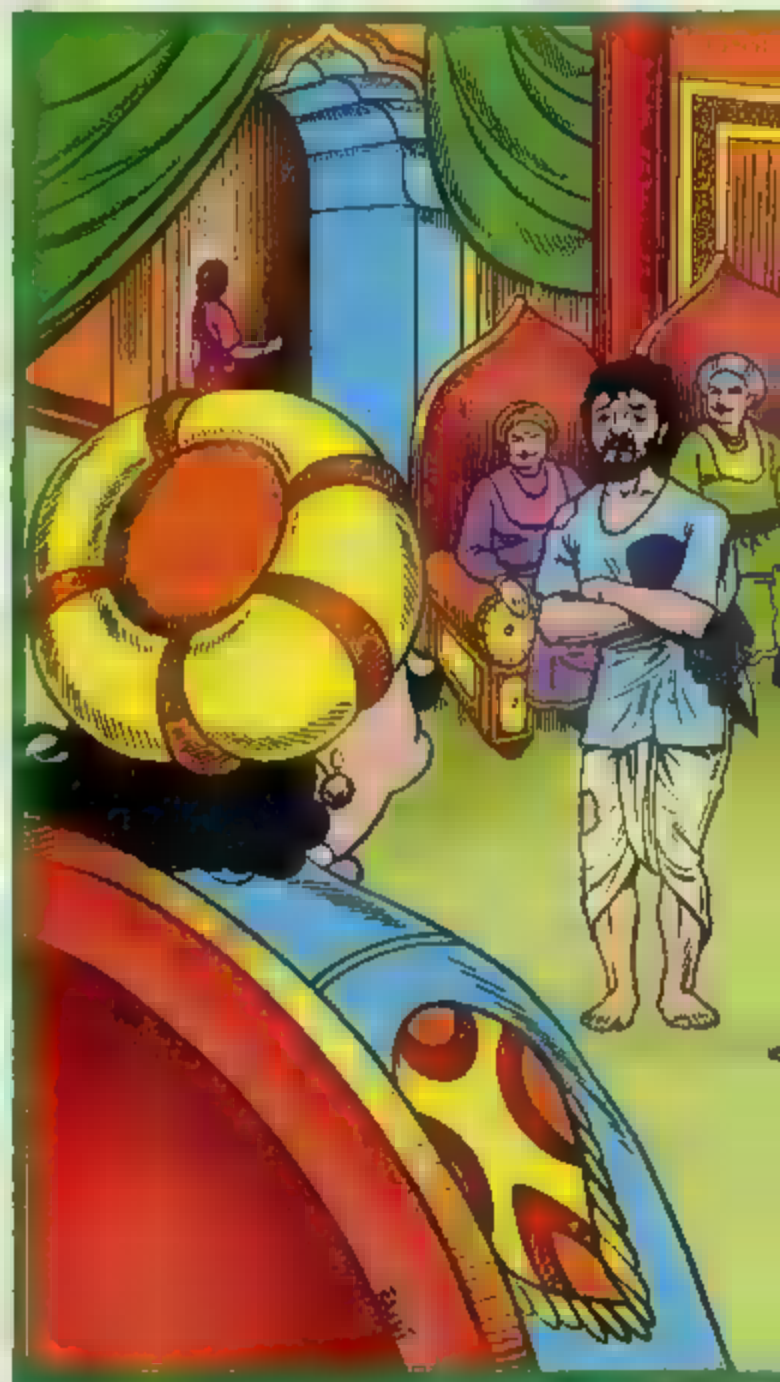
Swami realised that the king had understood the truth of the matter and he agreed that this was so.

"Then, you agree that you were at fault and that Chandra's decision had nothing to do with the fact that he's rich and you're poor?" asked the king.

Swami did not have any answer, and simply nodded his head doubtfully. Then the king said in a hard and grim voice: "Swami, your poverty and misfortune is entirely your making. You've to understand that and learn to work hard. Success is not a matter of luck."

Swami felt very small. Tears welled in his eyes. "Your majesty, you're absolutely right. The cause for all this is my lazy wife; she doesn't listen to me.

The king's voice became even harder. "Don't blame others for your weakness. Learn to accept your faults or you'll never change. Anyway, what has happened has happened. Now I'll show you a way out. I give you a week's time.



On the seventh day from today, bring your wife and children here to me. The teachers here are skilled in teaching economics and behaviour. They'll assess and correct your children. I'll take the responsibility for their progress.

"The headman of your village will give you an acre of fertile land. You and your wife must work hard on it and get enough produce to live well. You'll give half of your earnings to the government. That'll pay for the education of your children."

The king then turned to Chandra. "Chandra, you're, of course, free to get your daughter married to whomever you like. But I would like you to remember that Swami is your childhood friend. If he was not walking on the right path, it was your duty as a friend to have helped him correct himself. If you help Swami with all your heart and soul, he'll prosper and so will your friendship. Besides, you must keep in mind that breaking your word is not right. Don't allow pride to spoil your friendship."

Chandra was greatly struck by what the king said, and he bowed and said he would do as the king suggested. Chandra and Swami then took leave of the king.

The king now called for Ratnagupta. Prince Kumaraketu of Bhaumya, who had come to learn law and justice from King Nyaya Vardhana, was sitting beside him. He noticed that Ratnagupta was looking pale and weary.

The king looked at Ratnagupta and said: "Are you very worried about Manikarma? Don't worry so much. His father would have been just as worried about his future."

He turned to Manikarna and said: "Ratnagupta is like your father. Go with him now and come back alone to see me tomorrow."

Manikarna was very disappointed at being dismissed like this. He felt the king should have given his judgement one way or the other. However, since the king had called him again, he felt there was some hope the king would do something for him the next day. So he, too, left alone with Ratnagupta.

(To conclude)





A MATTER OF A RUPEE

There was a weekly market that was held in the village of Narayanpur. At his grocery stall, Avtar sold rice, flour, salt, oil, and other items. Virabhadra was a rich man of the village. He bought all his monthly provisions at Avtar's shop. He would not bother to check the bill that Avtar presented, because he felt Avtar was an honest man. He would readily pay the bill amount.

One day, Virabhadra did not have the right change. "I don't have a rupee right now. May I give it next time?" Avtar agreed.

When Virabhadra came next week, Avtar remembered the rupee due to him, but felt bad to ask for such a small sum. He hesitated a little as he presented Virabhadra with the bill, hoping he would remember the rupee. Virabhadra had obviously forgotten all

about it. He paid the exact bill amount and went away.

Now Avtar decided that he would remind him the next time. However, the next time too, he could not bring himself to mention it directly. "Have I given you the correct change?" he asked. "It's easy to miss a rupee sometimes."

Virabhadra still didn't remember the rupee he owed Avtar. "Yes, I know," replied Virabhadra. "Anyway what is a rupee worth these days?"

Now Avtar felt he could not really raise the issue of the rupee. But the rupee remained gnawing in his mind. He complained to his wife, but she said: "It's only a rupee; let it go." But Avtar felt it was not fair. He kept thinking of ways to remind Virabhadra about the rupee.

The next time Virabhadra came to

his shop, at ■ opportune moment Avtar said: "You know, you were right last time. A rupee doesn't go very far these days." Then he keenly waited for a reaction. There was none. Virabhadra agreed with Avtar and said: "I don't know what things are coming to these days. Soon a gold mohur will also lose its value." He then paid his bill exactly to the rupee and left.

After that Avtar tried different ruses to jog Virabhadra's memory. Once when Virabhadra turned up, Avtar made a great show of counting ■ pile of one-rupee coins. When he saw Virabhadra looking at him, he smiled and said, "You know every rupee counts."

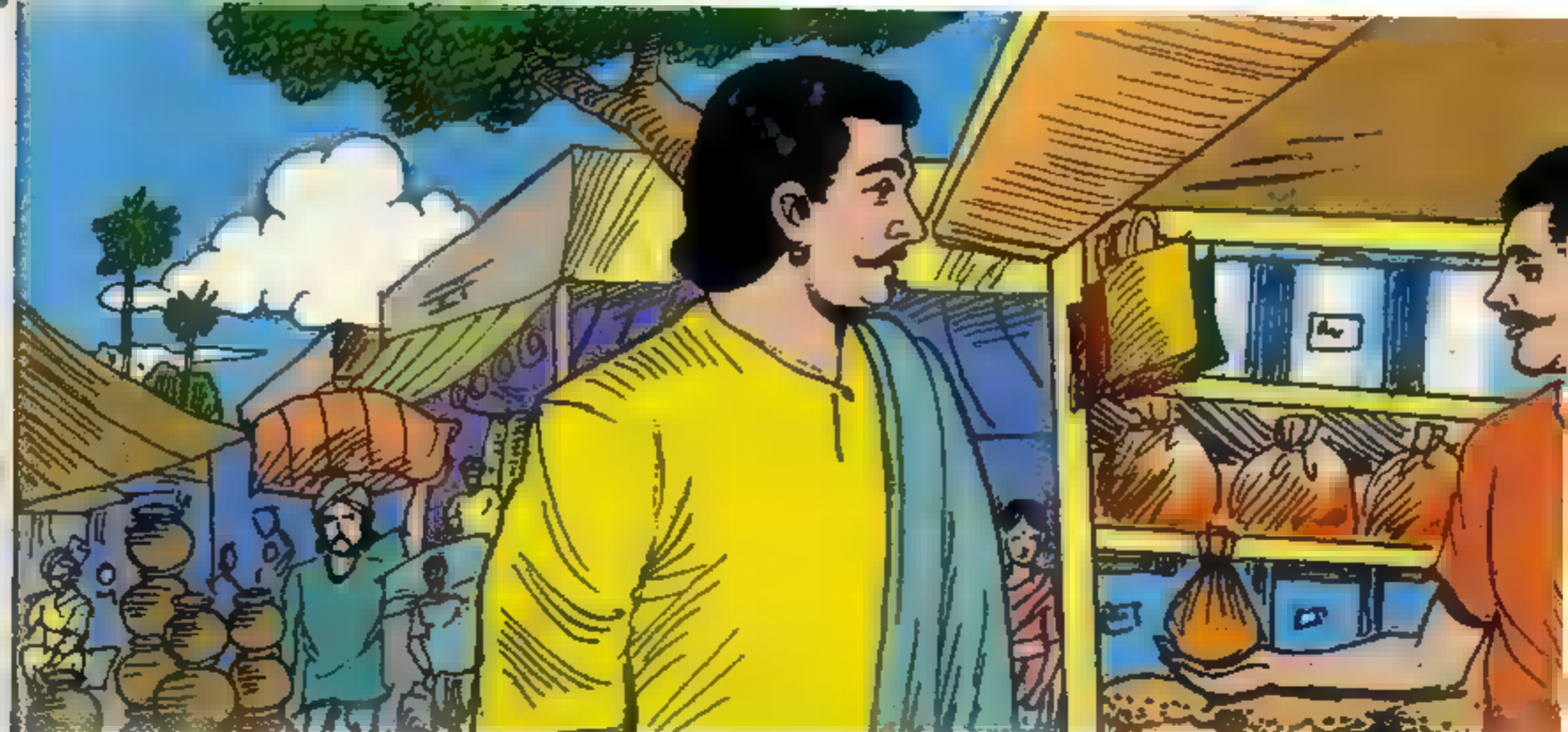
Virabhadra smiled and waited patiently till Avtar finished counting and

could attend to him. This irked Avtar. He went home and told his wife: "What kind of man is this Virabhadra? He doesn't remember his debts at all! He hasn't given me that rupee he owes me. I've tried to jog his memory in all kinds of ways. Today, I counted out twenty one-rupee coins in front of him and he just stood there like a big sack of potatoes and didn't even flinch."

His wife laughed and said: "The poor man has really forgotten. If you feel so bad, why don't you add it to your bill as amount due and be done with it?"

"That's a good idea!" said Avtar. "But I should have done it on the first day. Now it is too late and Virabhadra will take me really strange if I were to ask for the rupee now. He will wonder





how I remember such a small sum for such a long time.”

“Well, you haven’t forgotten, have you?” asked his wife unanswerably.

The next time Avtar thought he would add the rupee to the bill, but did not do it. When Virabhadra asked him for some *guavas*, he thought he would give him one less but each guava cost two rupees. So if he did that, he would be cheating Virabhadra, and that was not what he wanted to do at all. He just wanted the rupee that Virabhadra owed him.

A few days later Avatar saw Virabhadra walking along the main street. He seemed to be making his way to the shop. Avtar felt a prick of irritation. ‘I wonder what he wants now? He can’t even return a rupee,’ he grumbled to himself. He then saw Virabhadra change direction and cross the street. He went up to the village astrologer sitting under the tree opposite Avtar’s shop. He saw the astrologer saying something to

Virabhadra. Virabhadra leaned forward a little and listened seriously. Then he seemed to think hard for sometime. After that, he got up quickly, turned, and almost ran across the street to Avtar’s shop.

“Avtar,” he said, “don’t I owe you a rupee? You remember some days ago I didn’t have change and you said I could pay it later. Here it is.”

“Yes,” said Avtar completely mystified. “How did you suddenly remember?”

“Arrey, I had asked the astrologer to cast my daughter’s horoscope and I also gave him mine to read. He told me that if I didn’t repay all my debts by the end of this week, I would never pay them. Then I suddenly remembered. If you had remembered, why didn’t you ask me for the rupee or at least give me a hint?” declared Virabhadra.

“But I” Avtar began to say, and then decided to take the rupee without any more fuss.

I will say this for goldfish—they don't bark. After several years of living with a nervous Peke who

barks at shadows and bites postmen, it's nice to have the sort of pet that doesn't bark, talk, screech, chatter or growl. In these days of ever-increasing noise, the silence of the goldfish is indeed golden. Better still, they don't mess the carpet.

I've had my goldfish

GOLDFISH DON'T BARK

for three years, and they have never spoken a word in either anger or reproach. I like it

that way. I am content to stand and watch them gliding and twisting in liquid silence, their mouths opening and closing without ever emitting a sound — at least, none that I can hear.

There are four of them in the tank. The oldest and largest has lost a lot of his colour (in the same way we lose our hair, I suppose). Perhaps this is due to age; or perhaps it's a sort of fishy leucoderma.

Goldfish is a misnomer. Mine

are a bright orange. They do acquire a golden

tinge when the early morning

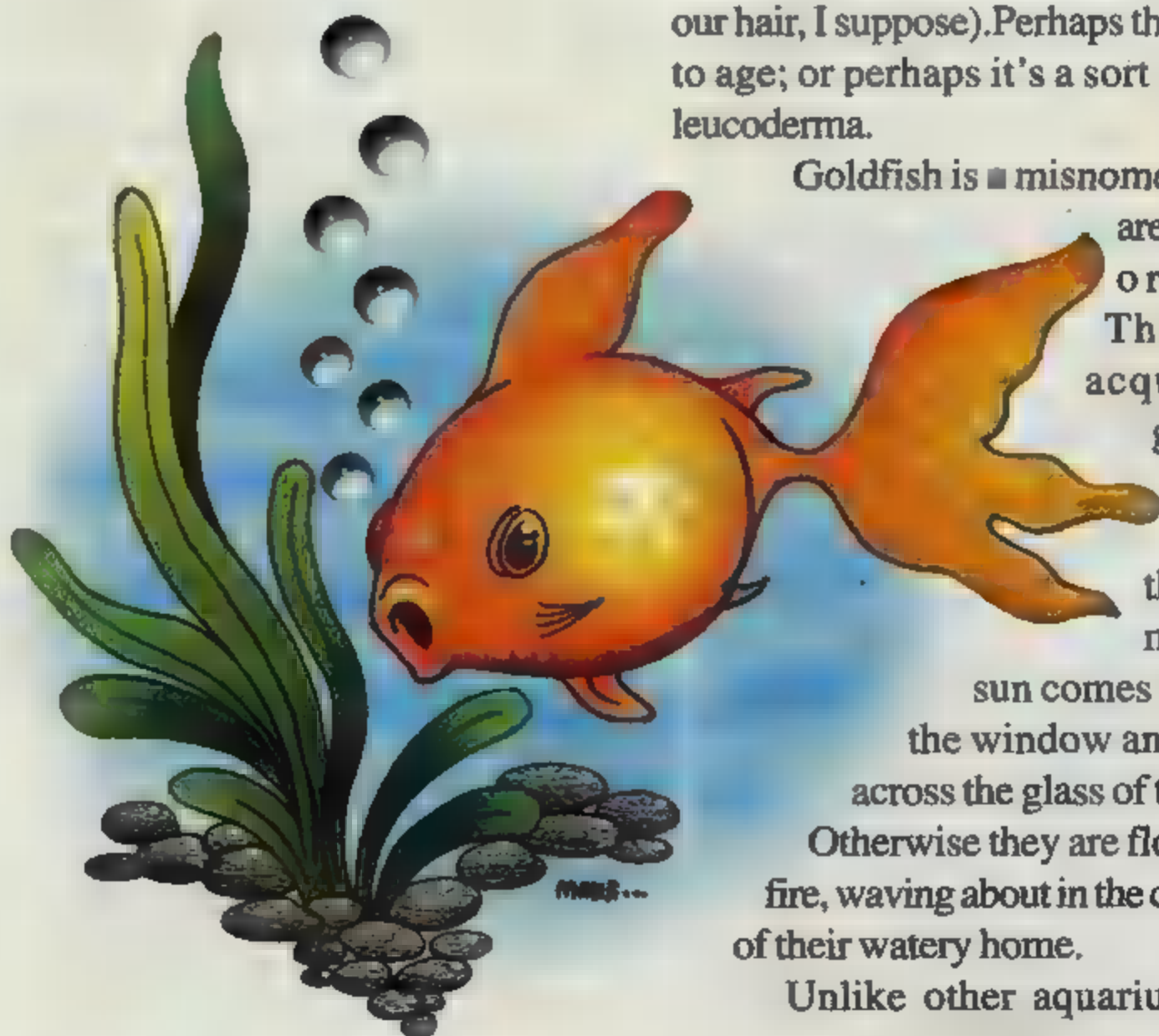
sun comes through

the window and slant

across the glass of the tank

Otherwise they are flowers of fire, waving about in the cool blue of their watery home.

Unlike other aquarium fish





goldfish do not need ■ lot of fuss and attention, which is another reason why I like them. Their water need be changed only once a month (the less it's changed the better), and for food ■ few bread-crumbs are sufficient. They do very well on a simple diet. Underfeeding won't harm them, whereas overfeeding will certainly kill them off.

Last winter, I had to go away for a couple of months, and I had to leave the goldfish behind. There was no one to feed them. When I returned I expected to find them dead. The water was rather murky but the fish were alive and well. They did not even seem exceptionally happy to see me.

Whenever I feel restless, I sit down and watch the goldfish. They never fail to calm my nerves. There they are spending their entire lives in a few cubic feet of water without apparently suffering from any form of neuroses. Their very aimlessness appeals to me. They eat, they come up for the occasional breath of air, and I suppose they sleep, although I have never seen them at it.

Perhaps they sleep while swimming. Most of the time they are swimming around in circles. It is consoling to know that no matter how aimless our human existence may seem to be, we cannot rival goldfish when it comes to being busy doing nothing for a long time.



A 'SAVING' GRACE

Prabhakar and Vibhakar were intimate friends. Their village suffered acute drought one year and people began to migrate to other places. The friends found it difficult to get any work. How long could they remain unemployed? So, they too decided to leave the place for the town a little away from their village where they hoped to get jobs.

"After all how much would we need?" Prabhakar thought aloud while they drew up plans. We need only a quarter kilo of rice and if vegetables are not cheap or are not available, we would just need a little salt and one green chilli. We will spend that much money to buy these things and save the rest of our earnings. And when we make enough savings, we shall start a small workshop or a grocery shop. What do you say?"

Vibhakar totally agreed with his friend's suggestion. They took a

solemn promise that they would live a modest life. When they reached the town, they also decided that they would go in different directions and take up work independent of each other so that one would not become a burden on the other. However, each one insisted that he would keep the promise they had made earlier before they left their village.

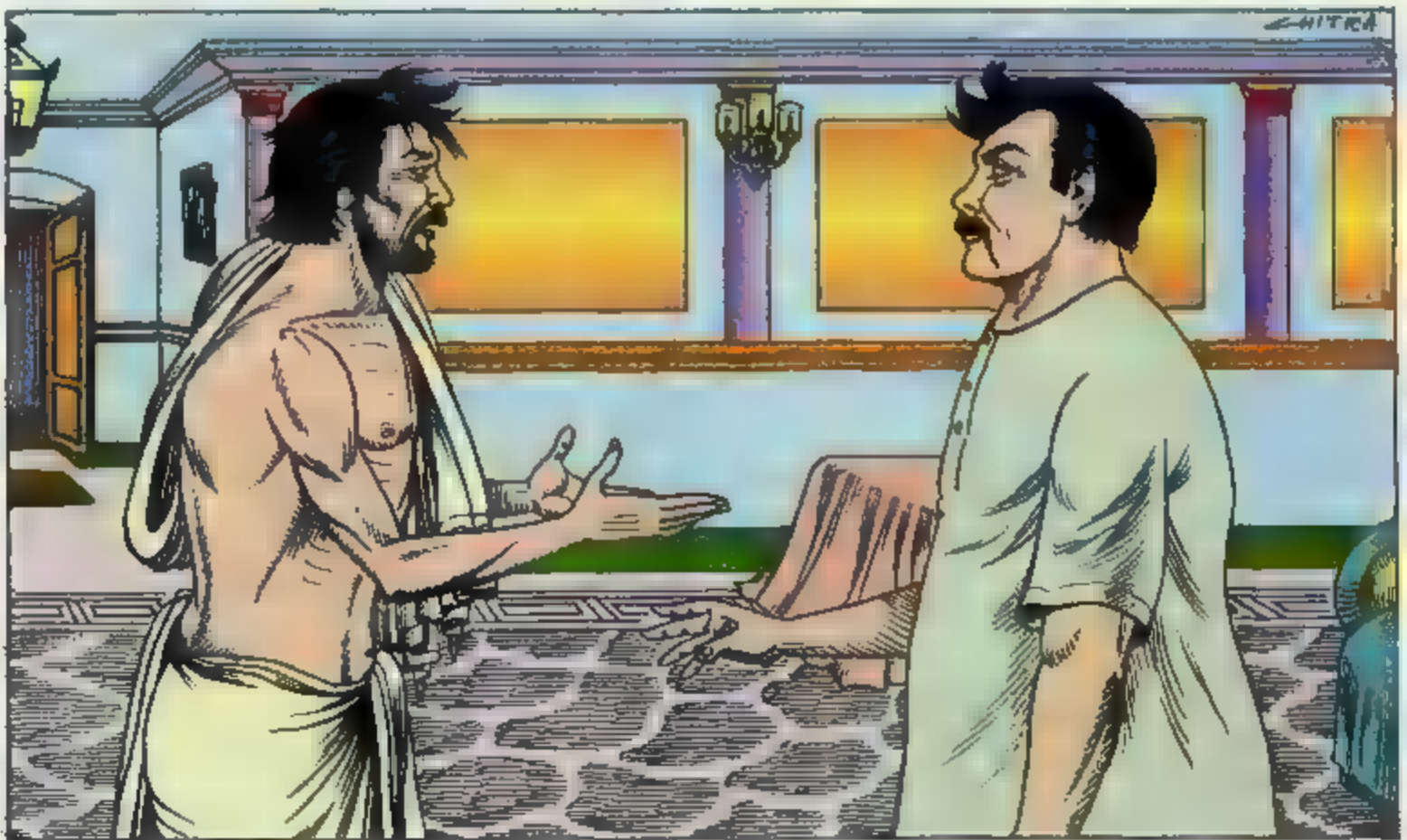
Prabhakar strictly followed the decision and led a strict life and limited his daily expenditure and he was able to make a sizeable saving. Vibhakar, too, did not deviate from the decisions for the first few days, though as time passed, he began wondering why he should not spend a little more to lead a slightly better life. He thought there was no point in denying oneself of a happy, contented life. He began spending more to enjoy better, tastier food.

Of course, every now and then he regretted that he was breaking the promise he had made along with his friend.

After some days, he found that he was spending almost every paisa that he earned and he had not made any saving. In fact, there were days when he had even to borrow money from others. As he had led an easy life, he was unable to take up any strenuous work which fetched a better wage. A stage came when he accumulated his borrowings. Nobody was now willing to give him even small loans anymore. Some days he had to go without food and became weak.

Meanwhile, Prabhakar's savings grew and he first started a modest workshop which was soon converted into a small factory. Even at that time, he saw to it that he ate only a frugal meal every day and did not go for any rich food though if he had so wished, he could have enjoyed delicacies. In no time he became an industrialist and a prominent person of the town.

The news of Prabhakar's rise in life reached Vibhakar and he decided to go and meet his friend and seek his help. On reaching Prabhakar's residence, he poured out his woes. Prabhakar gave him a patient hearing and said : "Look



here, Vibha, forget all that had happened. Every day I shall reach some rice, salt and chilli to you. You must start earning once again by sincere effort and try to clear all your debts first. You may put up a small hut in my compound and live here."

Vibhakar did that and Prabhakar sent him the items he needed for his food every day. One day Prabhakar called his friend. "You must be finding the food drab and monotonous. You do one thing. There is *imli* (tamarind) growing in the backyard; pluck some leaves and make a chutney. You'll find the food a little tasty."

Vibhakar did as his friend advised. Soon there were no leaves left on the plants which he could

reach from the ground. He went to Prabhakar and told him that there were no leaves left on the

i m l i plants.

"Didn't you notice that big tree over there?" said Prabhakar.

"There are

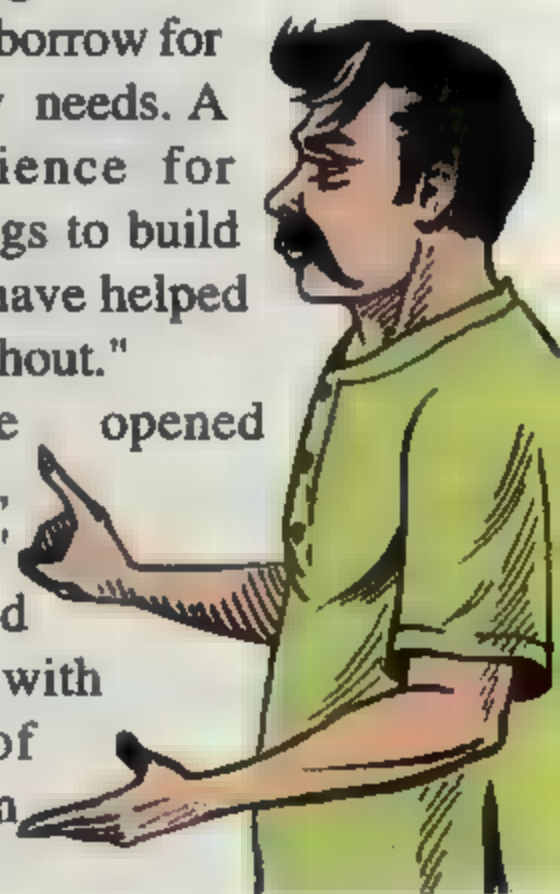
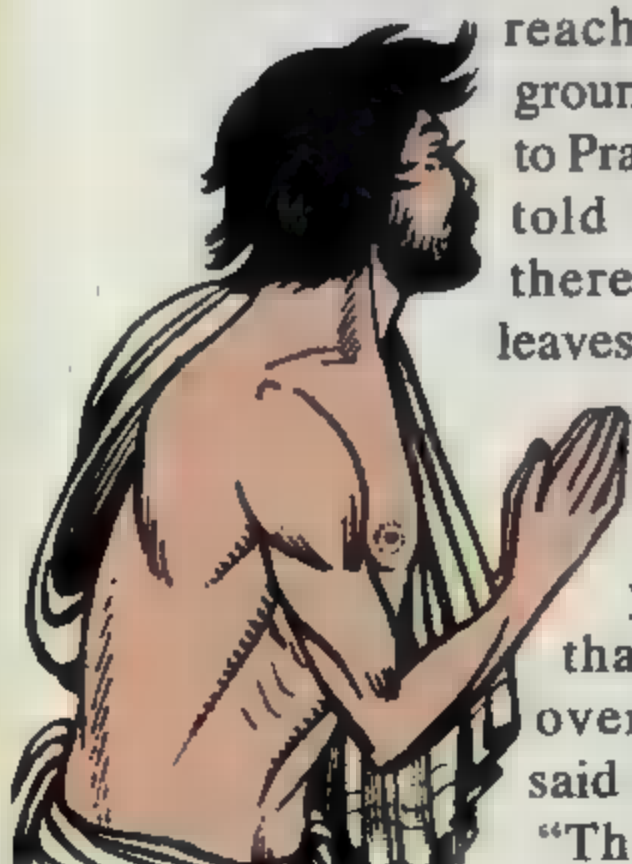
plenty of leaves on the branches, only you will have to climb the tree to pluck them."

After some days, Prabhakar met Vibhakar again and asked him : "Are there enough leaves on the tree?"

"Yes, Prabha," replied Vibhakar, "and I find that there are more leaves growing on the branches."

"That's the difference in our approach to life, my friend," remarked Prabhakar. "You did not allow the smaller plants to grow and give you more leaves, while on the bigger tree, ■ you plucked, more grew. It is the same case with our earnings. When you began spending from your savings, there was nothing left and you had to borrow for your daily needs. A little patience for your savings to build up would have helped you throughout."

"You've opened my eyes, Prabhakar," said Vibhakar, with traces of gratitude in his eyes.



FREEDOM TO LAUGH

Jairam Das was a Zamindar, owning landed property here and there. One day he set out to visit some of his farms. The village had several people who worked for their masters without any regular wages; they were given free food by their employers.

Varada was one of them. He had a daughter called Pampa. She was returning after taking food for her father when she saw the Zamindar walking in front. She did not want to overtake him, as they both were on a narrow bund. She looked aghast as Jairam Das slipped and fell down in the field which was slushy.

The Zamindar was a portly figure. Though Pampa rushed to him, both of them knew that she would not be able to raise him by herself. "Go and call somebody from the fields over there," said Jairam Das.

Pampa looked around. Her father

was far away. She saw Sivadas working in an adjacent field. She ran to him and told him about the accident to the Zamindar.

"Did you say he fell down?" said Sivadas half smilingly. "Has he hurt himself? He deserves some punishment for quarrelling with me!" He now laughed aloud, and then continued with his work.

Pampa then saw Somasekhar ploughing his field nearby. He listened to Pampa's pleading and said causally, "The Zamindar has no good word about workers. How then can I think of going to his help?"

Pampa saw him controlling his laughter. She turned round to go in another direction when she saw Chander and Gangaram walking towards their fields. She went up to them and told them about the mishap.

"Did you see him fall down?" asked



Gangaram. "It must have been a lovely sight to see that fatty slipping into the field! How unlucky that I missed the spectacle!"

He, too, was about to laugh when Chander checked him with a stern look. "Come on, Pampa, where is he?" he said.

Pampa led him to where Jairam Das was still making feeble efforts to raise himself up. Chander caught hold of his shoulders and with some difficulty, managed to stand him on his legs. "You're getting old, sir. Why didn't you have someone to accompany you? Don't expect anyone to come to

your help if anything happens to you. When Pampa told me about the accident, I took pity on you. I came for her sake."

Chander saw that the Zamindar had dirtied his dress in the fall. He could not be walking back home in that state. So, Chander went and hailed a bullock cart and helped Jairam Das and Pampa to get into it. "He may need help, so you take him home," he told Pampa after he

had instructed the cart driver where to take the Zamindar.

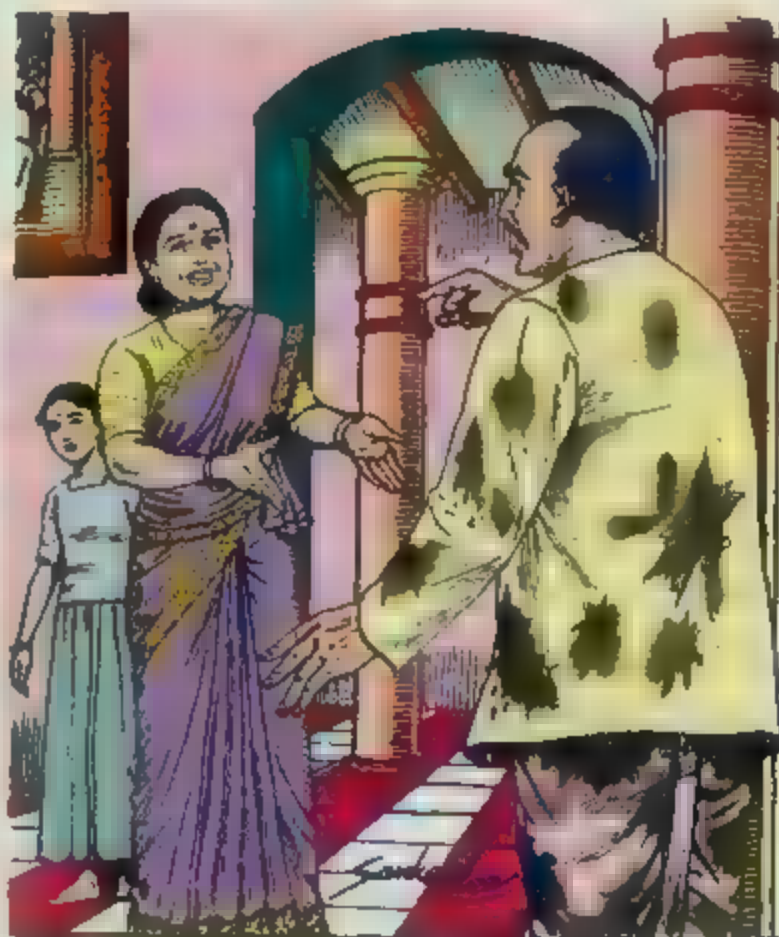
His wife came to the portico when she heard the bells on the cart-wheels. "What's this? What happened to you?" she asked, somewhat bewildered. The next moment, she started laughing uncontrollably.

The Zamindar could not stand the sight of his wife laughing at him. "Stop that nonsense! This girl saw me fall down, she had sympathy for me and got some help. And look at that! You think it is a big joke!"

"Let me go now, Amma, I've to look up my friend Pramila," said Pampa to the Zamindar's wife. "I shall come back later."

"What's the hurry?" queried the lady. "There's a lot of work here. Attend to that and then you may go."

By now word had spread about the accident, and Varada came to the Zamindar's house to call on him and check whether his daughter was there. When Pampa saw him coming in, she ran up to him, saying, "Father, please



keep a watch over the grain. I shall go and meet Pramila and come back soon."

Varada wondered why she was in a hurry to meet her friend. He guessed: 'She probably wants to share the news of the Zamindar's mishap. Let me see what she's up to!' He hid behind the haystack in the courtyard.

Pramila, who was of the same age as of Pampa, was happy to see her. She was working as a maid in the house next to that of the Zamindar.

"Pampa! You seem to have dropped from the skies!" said Pramila as she grabbed the outstretched hands of her friend. "I haven't seen you for ages. What's all the news?"

"That I'll tell you by and by," said Pampa. "But first tell me, what news have you to tell me?"

"Nothing particular, Pampa," moaned Pramila. "But I'm sure you have some news for me. Out with it!" she added as she noticed a smile forming on the face of her friend.

Pampa could not now control her laughter. In between

giggles she managed to narrate her experience. "How did the Zamindar fall?" queried Pramila.

"Oh! He was rolling like an elephant!" she replied and tried to imitate the fall. "Pramila, I can't tell you how I controlled my laughter! If he had seen me, I'm sure he would have thought of punishing me. Tell me, we slaves who slog for people like him, do we have freedom even to laugh? I saw everybody laughing - whoever heard of the fall. Why, even his wife was laughing over his predicament." Both Pampa and Pramila had a good laugh for the next few moments.

Watching the two friends sharing the hilarious incident, Varada was taken aback when he listened to his daughter complaining of lack of freedom as they had to work and earn a livelihood. There and then he decided that he would send his daughter to school and advise Pramila's father to follow suit. "After all, they must enjoy life when they are young," he told his wife when he returned home and was

narrating the incident. "She must go to school and must have freedom to laugh!"



Saga of India

Glimpses of a great civilisation – its glorious quest for Truth through the ages



10. An adventure into the world of dead



It was Sandip's birthday and a dozen of his friends and his sister Chameli had gathered in their house. After the usual hullabaloo, they had retired into the garden.

"Grandpa, you love songs, don't you? At least two of my friends are excellent singers. They will be as happy to sing to you as you will be to listen to them," said Chameli. That was to entice the professor to join their company. They had already placed a chair for him under a lovely *Krishnachura* tree teeming with flowers. The boys and girls, some of whom were already familiar to Professor Devnath, greeted him warmly and they sat down on a carpet in front of him.

Chameli's friends sang and they sang indeed well. "It was a rewarding experience, I must say," commented the professor.

"Thank you, sir, but what about a

reward for us?" very sweetly asked one of the singers. Others applauded her question.

Taken by surprise - a pleasant surprise, though - at the forthcoming nature of children, the professor smiled and said : "Of course, I will be most happy to arrange for the rewards you richly deserve. Come on, let me know your choice - chocolates or ice-creams or toffees of any variety..."

"We had already had them in plenty and we are lucky to have well-wishers who are ready to give them again! Give us what nobody else known to us can give," said several voices in slightly different words. "To be precise," added Sandip, "give us stories, I mean legends of India."

"By the way, Grandpa, the other day, when I was still brooding over the story of Markandeya and told you how deeply I was impressed by the wonderful way in which the sage-boy conquered his destined death, you said in a murmur, as if you were talking to yourself, that it was only one of a series of adventures through which man has

tried to win a victory over death. For your information, Grandpa, I have already narrated the story of Markandeya to my friends. Will you please tell us ■■■ stories ■■ the same theme, if there are really any?" said Chameli.

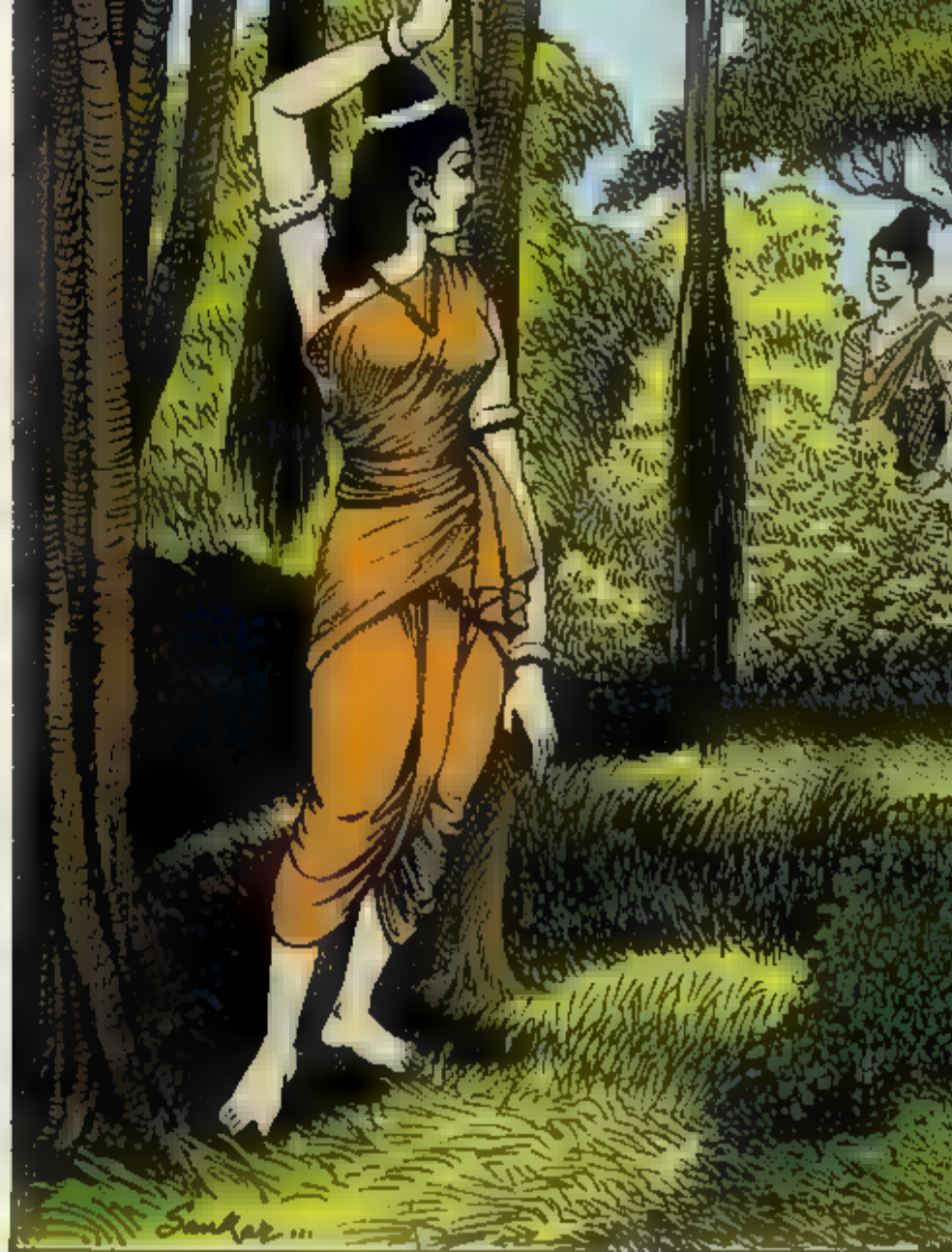
"There are, my dear children, there are," muttered the professor tenderly. He settled himself into the mood necessary for telling stories, as someone placed his cup of evening tea ■■ a stool in front of him. The narration began flowing from him before long.

Long, long ago, in a hamlet close to ■ forest lived ■ young man named Ruru. There were ■ number of sages in the forest and Ruru revered them. He learnt from the scriptures and acquired from them knowledge on several subjects.

This bright young man loved a young girl named Pramodvara. She was as kind and compassionate ■■ she was intelligent and beautiful. Ruru and Pramodvara were to be married.

One day, early in the morning, Ruru went out into the forest in search of fresh flowers in order to make ■ bouquet for Pramodvara. That was ■ time when life was simple and flowers, looked upon ■ gifts and blessings of Mother Nature, were more valued than ornaments.

Pramodvara, on her way to the river



for ■ bath, peeped into Ruru's hut but did not ■■ him there. Where did he go? She guessed that he must have ventured into the forest. Several times she had warned him against entering the forest before sunrise because many wild beasts were known to be prowling nearby. Anxiety led her into the forest and she looked into the woods hoping to find Ruru. Indeed, she found him before long. He had already plucked some colourful and fragrant flowers to make ■■ excellent bouquet.

As Ruru spotted Pramodvara waiting for him, leaning against a banyan tree, he felt delighted while Pramodvara looked angry. Ruru, however, knew that



she had only feigned anger and in no time she would blush and smile when he bestowed his gifts on her.

Alas, that was not to be. All of a sudden, Pramodvara looked pale. She cast her fearful gaze at something on the ground and gave out a faint shriek. Ruru was still away when she fell down.

Ruru came rushing to her. He saw ■ serpent, like a string of lightning, disappearing into a nearby bush. It was a terribly poisonous cobra.

Ruru realized the situation. Rarely did anybody survive ■ cobra-bite. He sat down trembling and took Pramodvara's head onto his lap and tried to make her speak. But that was in vain. All she did was to cast a meaningful glance at him, as if wishing to convey her great anguish at this unexpected turn of events. As if

she desired to say that she did not wish to die in this manner - and as if she wished that Ruru could do something to save her life.

At first stunned, Ruru soon grew determined to do his best to revive Pramodvara. He would not allow her relatives to take her body away for the last rites. He sat near it for the whole day like a statue, invoking the gods and all the supernatural powers to help him, if they could.

At night the luminous being to appear before him was none other than the god of Love - Madana. He alone understood the pangs of the lover at the sudden departure of his beloved. He revealed to Ruru the secret by which he could enter the nether-world and locate the spirit of Pramodvara.

Ruru entered the world of the dead. There was ■ region where the spirits of those who had just died waited for their future. Ruru located the spirit of Pramodvara there. But the guardians of that strange world would not let him communicate with her! There was a long dialogue between them and Ruru. The god of Death himself was deeply impressed by Ruru's great and noble love for Pramodvara and agreed to let her live again. But since she had exhausted her own destined life-span, she could live with only half of the remaining years of Ruru's life.

Needless to say, Ruru was only too glad to offer half of his remaining life to

Pramodvara. She sprang back to life and they were married and lived an ideal life.

"Do you understand the significance of the legend?" asked Grandpa, once his narration had been concluded.

"A charming story, but so far as significance goes..." The boys and girls were not sure.

"Ordinarily we refer to life and death as if they were opposed to each other. Actually death is only the disappearance of a particular mode of life. What is opposed to death is love. The degree of your feelings at the loss of someone depends on the degree of your love for him or her. The legend gives us the hint that if one day any power will win ■ victory over death, it will be the power of love. That, of course, has to be a very different kind of love. Yet another legend in Indian mythology gives us some indication of that. Can any of you tell me which that legend is?" asked Grandpa.

"Aren't you referring to the story of

Savitri and Satyavan?" one of the children spoke out.

"Fine!" exclaimed Grandpa. "Have you read that legend in the *Mahabharata*?"

"No, sir, but I learnt about it from my mother who regularly reads a great epic, *Savitri*, by Sri Aurobindo."

"A great epic, indeed. Sri Aurobindo, the Mahayogi and the Mahakavi, has revealed profound truths in that wonderful work. I am sure, all of you know the story of Savitri. I need not narrate it to you," said Grandpa.

There was a moment's silence. Then several voices began buzzing at the same time. "No, sir, many of us do not know about it. Besides, we do not know about the epic also."

"All right, all right. I shall tell you about it. But on another day. It is time for this old man to leave the young ones to their own adventures," said Grandpa as he stood up.

- Visvavasu

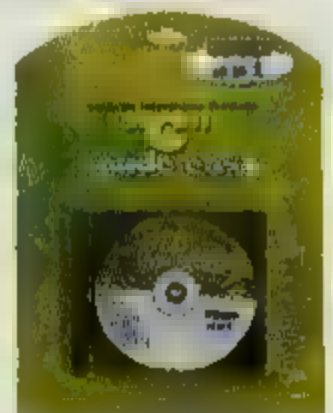
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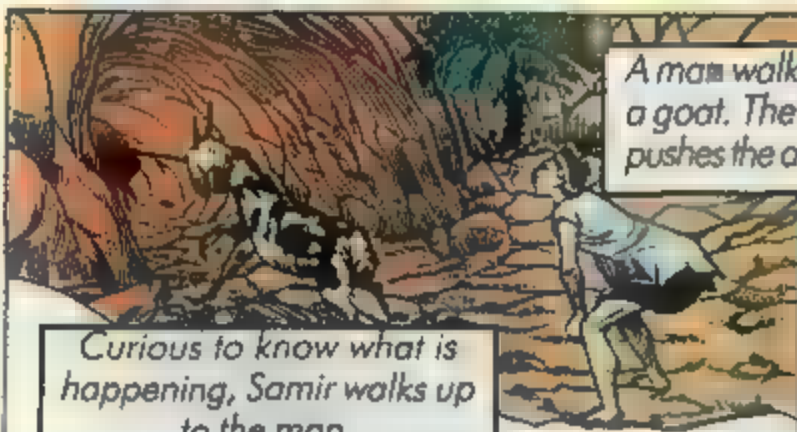
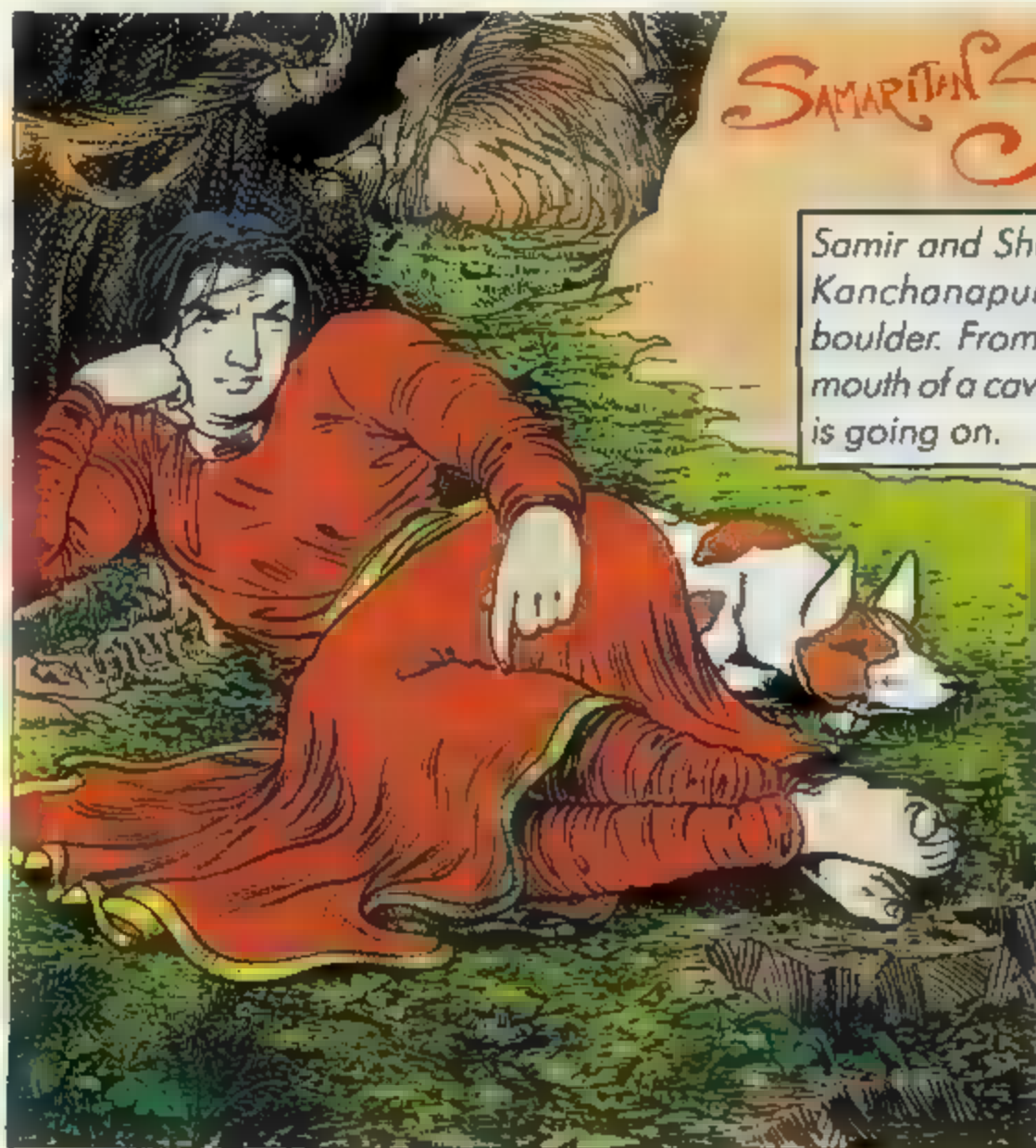
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SAMIR'S SAMIR

A CHANDAMAMA PRESENTATION

Art: Paani

Samir and Sheru reach the outskirts of Kanchanapura. They relax below a boulder. From there Samir can see the mouth of a cave where something strange is going on.



A man walks up to the cave leading a donkey and a goat. The donkey has a big load on its back. He pushes the animals inside the cave and waits outside.

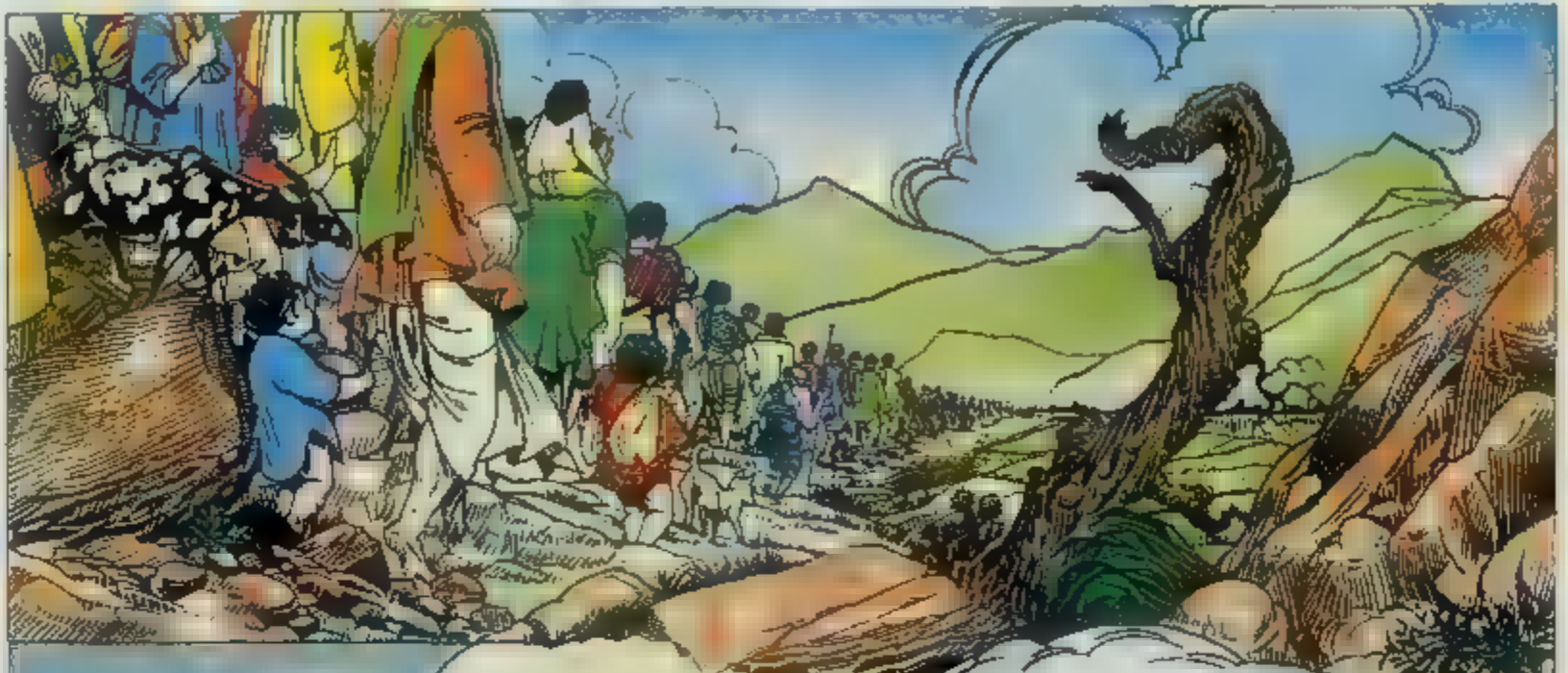
Curious to know what is happening, Samir walks up to the man.

What menace? Tell me, mister, maybe I can tackle it!

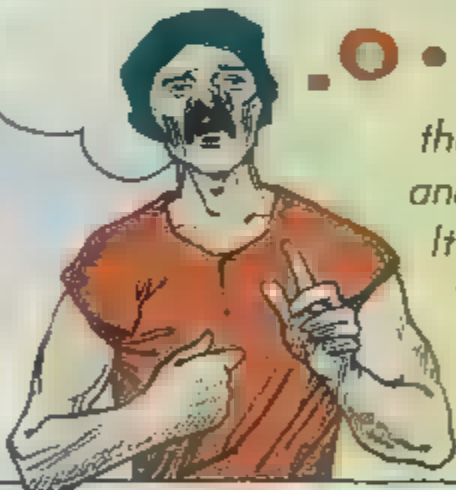
Is anybody inside the cave? Are you waiting for him to come out? What was the donkey carrying? Food?

It's not such an easy job! Can you drive out a demon who has been threatening the whole village? And he has been here for long!

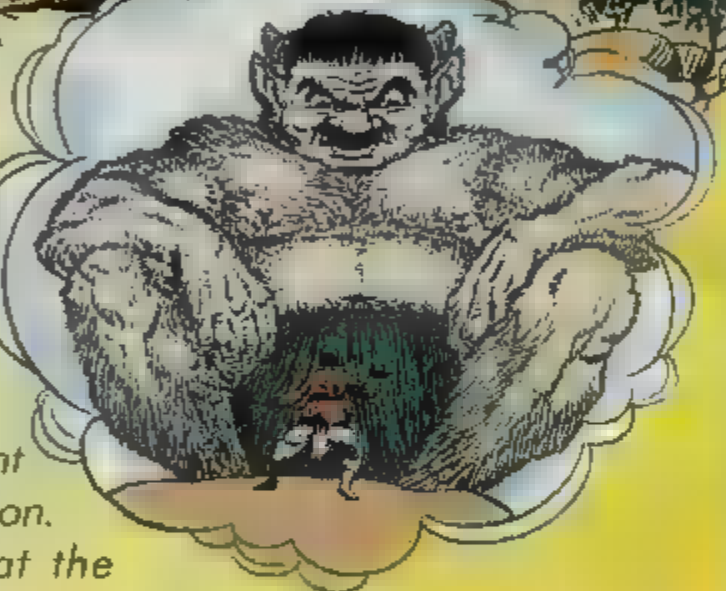
Oh! This is a daily routine. I don't know when this village will be rid of the menace!



Because of him, the villagers had migrated else-where. After about a year, they came back. Soon, their goats and fowl started disappearing. One day, the assistants of Ponnayya the exorcist



happened to see a huge demon on the hilltop. He went and talked to the demon.



It was agreed that the villagers would send the demon a goat and a lot of food every day and he agreed not to harass the villagers. Ponnayya then called a meeting of the villagers.



That is the only way we can escape the wrath of the demon. Won't you accept the agreement I have reached with the demon?

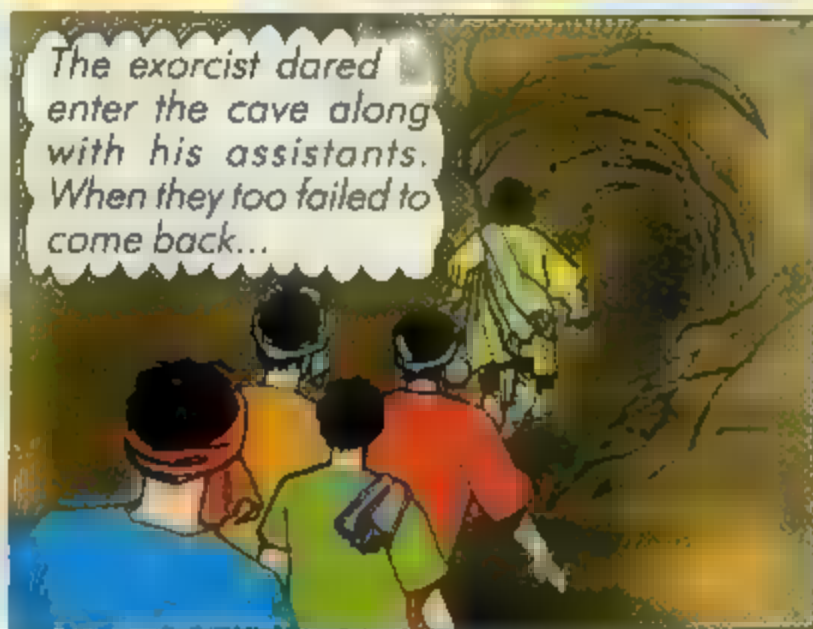
Yes, Yes! We'll take turns and send him what he has demanded.



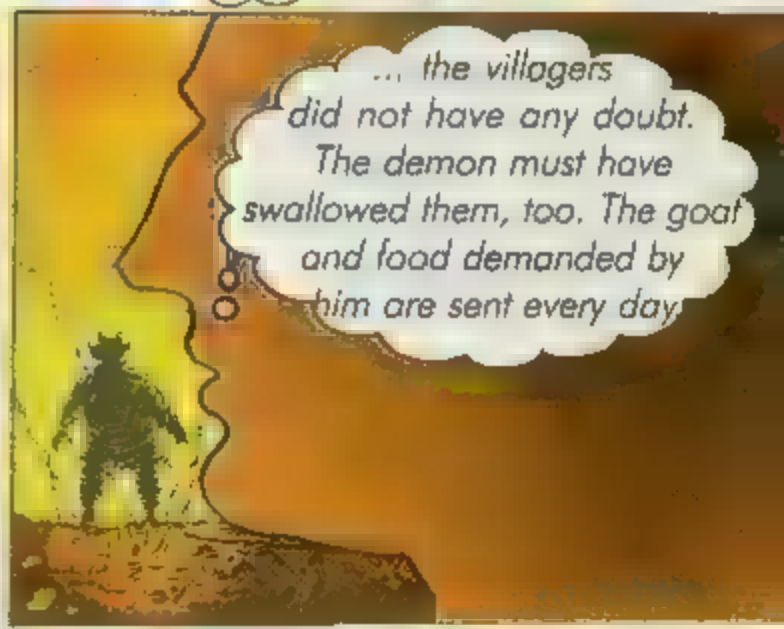
One day the members of Ponnayya's family left for another village. When they did not come back for several days, the villagers thought the demon must have killed them and eaten them.



He doesn't know I have kept many demons under my thumb! Does he mean to threaten me? I'll teach him a lesson!



The exorcist dared enter the cave along with his assistants. When they too failed to come back...



... the villagers did not have any doubt. The demon must have swallowed them, too. The goat and food demanded by him are sent every day.



The whole thing is mysterious! Could it be that the exorcist, his family, his assistants are all staying in the cave and enjoying at the expense of the villagers?

So the people feared, Ponnayya and his people might have been swallowed by the demon? Has anybody seen him afterwards?

No. But we are abiding by the agreement he made with the demon. We send the food and the goat daily.

Samir conjures up a plan.

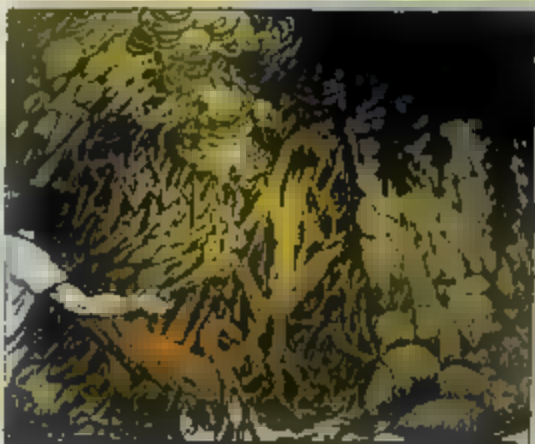
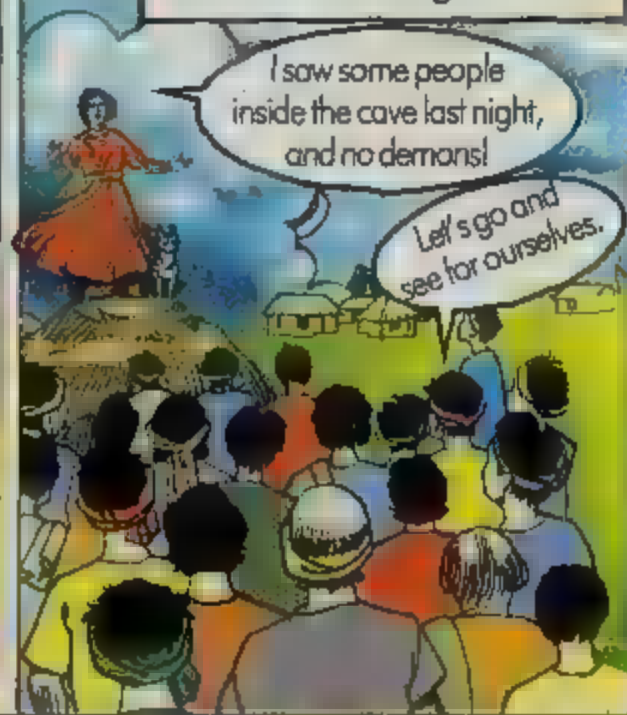
That night Samir goes near the cave mouth and tries to listen to any voices or sounds coming from inside. He hears some muffled conversation.



He crawls inside the cave noiselessly to take a close look. He sees some human beings eating food. None of them looks like a demon!

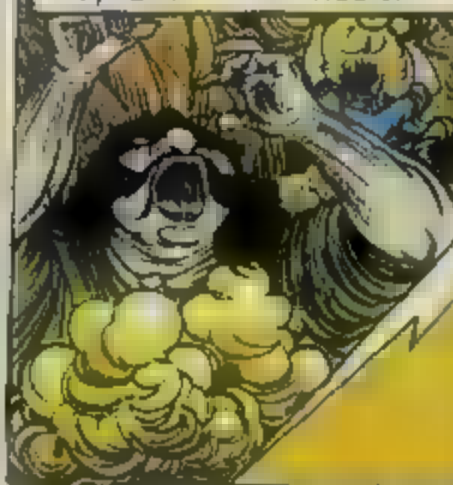


The next morning ...



Samir and some villagers gather at the cave mouth where they set fire to dry wood and leaves.

As smoke enters the cave, Ponnayya, his family, and assistants all rush out. Realising that their game-plan has failed, they take to their heels.



Thank you, sir, you have driven away the real demon!

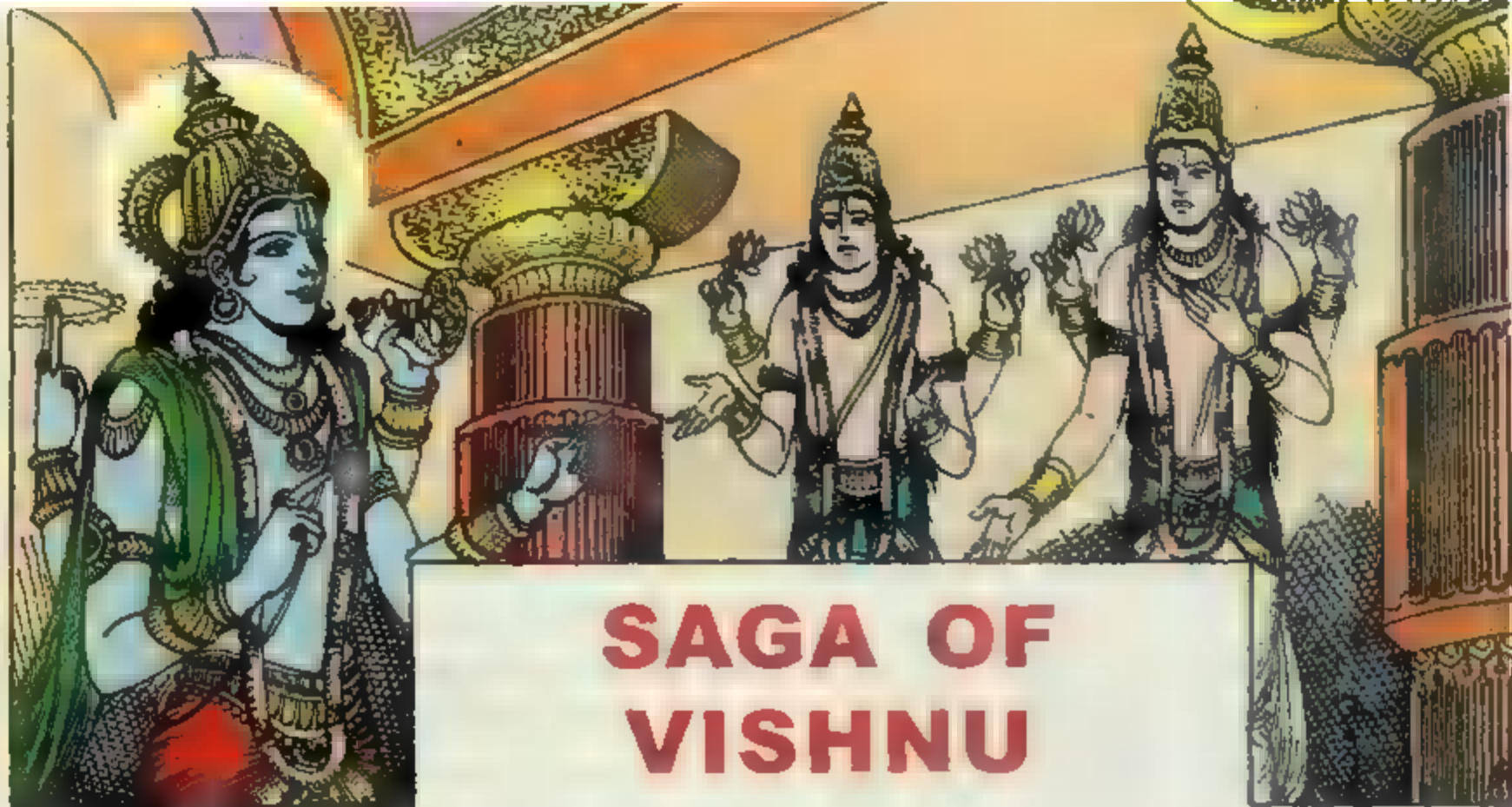


Where shall we go now, Sheru?



After bidding good-bye to the villagers, Samir leaves Kanchanapura.

Next month : A new adventure



SAGA OF VISHNU

5. THE VARAHA INCARNATION

"You cannot thwart the curse of great sages nor can you avoid their effect," said Lord Vishnu to his sentries, Jaya and Vijaya, who had denied entry to the Lord's abode to the four sons of Lord Brahma. "You can either take birth as my friends for seven lifetimes before joining me again in Vaikunta or you can become my enemies for three lifetimes before returning to me. What would you like to do? The choice is yours."

Jaya and Vijaya immediately answered: "O Lord, we can't bear to be away from you for long. Please grant me three lifetimes as your enemy, so that we return to you as soon as possible."

The sages, who were watching the whole scene, hailed the choice the two had made and then said: "O Merciful

Lord, we realise that we were hasty when we cursed Jaya and Vijaya. We really regret what we have done. Please forgive us." Then they went their way, singing the praise of the Lord.

Jaya and Vijaya were born as the sons of King Kashyapa and his wife Diti. They were called Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha. The two brothers grew up to be very powerful. They prayed to Lord Brahma for special powers. After many austerities and a great deal of hard *tapasya*, they won His grace and blessings, and with that they gained many gifts and secret powers. When they felt strong enough, they set off on a campaign against Lord Vishnu.

Hiranyakashipu became the king of the *rakshasas* and then decided to take

on Vishnu, the Lord of the three worlds. Hiranyaksha went round the world with his mace, roaring out a challenge to anyone who could fight with him. He committed the most heinous of crimes in order to provoke and anger Vishnu. The last straw was when he rolled the Earth out of her



place into the Cosmic Sea. The Earth sank into the waters. Bhoo Devi, the spirit of the Earth, prayed to Lord Vishnu, the Protector, in great distress. Brahma, the Lord of Creation, was also upset at the destruction of his creation. He, too, prayed to Lord Vishnu.

Lord Vishnu took pity on the Earth and then assumed His third *avatar*.

From Brahma's sacrificial fire there emerged ■ thumbsize spot of light that took the form of a wild boar. As the spectators at the sacrifice watched, this miraculous boar grew first to the size of an elephant and then to the size of ■ mountain and then even bigger till it seemed to fill the whole sky.

All the celestial beings that saw the sight hailed the boar ■ an incarnation of Lord Vishnu - the *Varaha* Avatar.

The boar had strong feet and a thick hide. It had a snout as strong as a thunderbolt. Its eyes were as red as the rising sun and its bristles glistened like gold. The boar's roar echoed and thundered through the universe. It lifted its hard, shiny snout and with a loud bel- low, plunged into the Cosmic Sea. It lifted the Earth on its strong tusk and held her aloft.

Just then Hiranyaksha attacked Varuna, the God of the Oceans, and challenged him to ■ fight. Varuna told him: "You're a great warrior. Why are you wasting your time on me? You should fight with the boar Varaha. Hasn't he walked away with the beautiful Earth that you flung into the Cosmic Sea?"

Varuna's words enraged Hiranyaksha. He at once picked up his mace and attacked the boar. Vishnu, in the form of the boar, also picked up ■ mace ready to fight. Hiranyaksha fought so ferociously that he knocked the

mace off the boar's hand.

The boar smiled appreciating Hiranyaksha's prowess. There was a mighty fight that shook the universe. In the end, Varaha used his strong snout and bored Hiranyaksha to death.

Bhoo Devi then married Lord Vishnu who was in the form of the great boar. He placed Bhoo Devi on his thigh. Lord Brahma, all the Devas, and other celestial beings took delight at this sight, and showered flowers on them.

Hiranyakashipu, Hiranyaksha's older brother, was filled with fury at what had happened. He wanted to avenge his brother's death. In order to become powerful enough to fight Vishnu, he decided to pray to Lord Brahma and receive His grace. At that time, his wife Lilavati was expecting their baby. Yet, he left her and went into the forest to do *tapasya*, which was hard and lasted long.

In the meantime, Indra, the leader of the Devas, kidnapped Lilavati because he wanted to kill the child she was carrying. Narada intercepted him and said: "Indra, what you're doing is unjust and unfair. Hiranyakashipu thinks of Vishnu all the time, even though it is with hatred. This hatred will turn into love in his child and it will be born with great love for Vishnu. So, leave Lilavati to me and go back."

Narada took Lilavati to his ashram. The child in Lilavati's womb grew up

listening to Narada singing in praise of Lord Vishnu and extolling his virtues. In due course, a son was born to Lilavati.

Hiranyakashipu finally came to the end of his *tapasya* and Lord Brahma appeared before him and granted him a boon. Now Hiranyakashipu had



thought this out carefully. He asked that he be made immortal. Brahma said, it was something he could not do, since any being who was born had to die. Hiranya-kashipu said: "Then let it be that I will die neither in the sky nor on the earth; neither in the day nor at night; neither at home nor outside the home. No being, whether god or man or any

kind of animal, should be able to kill me. I should not die at the hands of any created life." Brahma said: "So be it!"

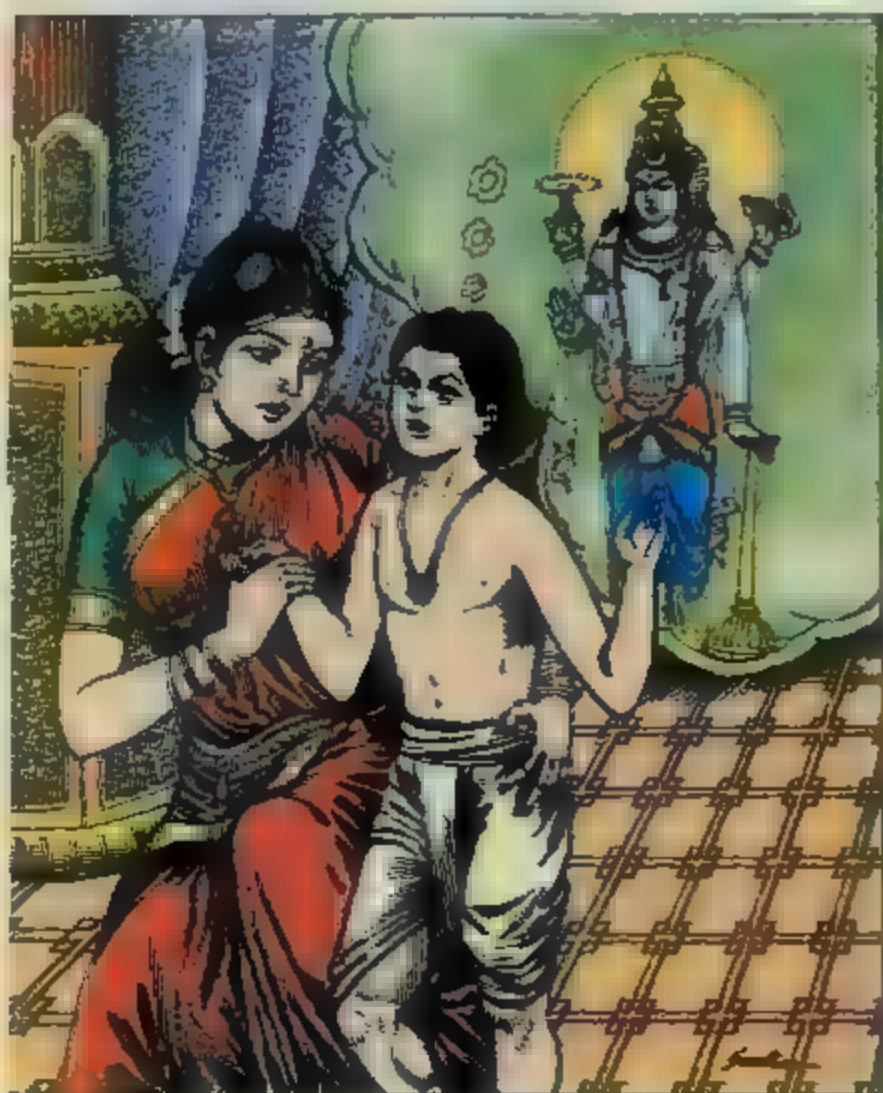
Hiranyakashipu was now sure that no one could kill him, for he felt that he had taken care of all possibilities in his boon from Lord Brahma. Determined to take on Lord Vishnu, he returned home. On the way, he met Narada who told him all that had happened and took him to his wife and son. Hiranyakashipu named his son Prahlada. He then took his wife and son home.

He was now very angry with Indra for trying to kidnap his wife and resolved to take revenge on him. He at-

tacked Indra and won the crown of *Devaloka* or the kingdom of the gods. He then conquered all the four directions of the universe and became the master of the Four Corners of the universe. He oppressed the *Devas* and ill-treated them mercilessly. When he tried to insult Indra's wife Shachidevi, Lilavati stopped him. Yet, his burning anger and fury was not quenched. He destroyed the ashrams of the sages and persecuted Vishnu's devotees. Even this was not enough. He felt that the fire in him would not die out unless he confronted Lord Vishnu directly and defeated him.

This became his reason for living. But he could not find Vishnu anywhere. He looked for him in all the three worlds without success. Finally, he climbed Mount Kailas. But he did not find him there either. So, he announced in a loud voice: "This Vishnu is a contemptible coward. He's so scared of me that he has gone into hiding!" He then returned to his own kingdom.

As Prahlada grew up, he turned out to be a great lover of Vishnu. His greatest joy was to think about the greatness of Lord Vishnu and sing his praises. This worried and upset his father. Hiranyakashipu wondered how *his* son could be a Vishnu devotee. Anyway, Hiranyakashipu was keen that his son was well educated. He wanted him to take over the leadership of the



2
rakshasas and continue the battle against Vishnu. He appointed Chanda and Marka, the sons of his own guru, as Prahlada's gurus.

However, Prahlada remained a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, and his gurus could do nothing to change his attitude. He also preached and taught the other students to love Vishnu and sing his glory.

This was against the king's orders, but Prahlada went his own way. Finally, when Chanda and Marka felt that Prahlada had learnt all that he needed to know, they brought him back to Hiranyakashipu. He was thrilled to see the handsome and well-behaved youngster that Chanda and Marka presented to him. He lovingly took Prahalada on his lap and asked him to sing in ■ verse the most valuable thing he had learnt.

Prahlada at once sang a verse in a sweet voice. The verse said he had learnt whatever his teachers had taught him. "I have learnt what is the most valuable, which is to devote myself to Lord Vishnu. If one devotes one's life to Lord Vishnu, then life becomes meaningful."

Hiranyakashipu got up, trembling with anger, as he heard these words



from Prahlada's mouth. He roughly pushed him off his lap and turned an enraged glance at Chanda and Marka. "Is this what you've taught my son?" he asked furiously. The trembling guru said it was not their fault. No matter what they told him or how they taught him, Prahlada refused to see reason and insisted on going his way.

Hiranyakashipu then, with great patience and affection, explained that Vishnu was the enemy of their family and indeed their race. He was not a person to be loved or even admired. By doing so, he told Prahlada, he would only be disgracing the family and it would be an unpardonable mistake.

"You must stop this at once!" he said.

Prahlada's answer was short and simple: "I'm sorry, father, but I can't help it. Like a magnet does Lord Vishnu attract me and I'm like a piece of iron with no thought or will. No matter what you say or how you curse me, as long as there is life in me, so long will I be a devotee of Lord Vishnu."



Prahlada's answer first struck Hiranyakashipu with wonder and awe. He then remembered the wrongs he believed Vishnu had done and he rose again in a terrible fury and thundered: "Then you've to die, you traitor! You'll starve to death."

He locked up Prahlada in a dun-

geon without food or water. Lilavati was in great agony, but Hiranyakashipu did not pay attention to her suffering. Prahlada spent his time in prison meditating on Lord Vishnu. Days went by, but he did not die. Finally, Hiranyakashipu gave in to Lilavati's pleadings and released Prahlada from prison.

Hiranyakashipu was amazed to see Prahlada emerge from the prison fresh and bright just as he had entered it. He felt an instant love for this extraordinary son of his. However, his intense hatred for Vishnu overtook him and, in blind fury, he ordered that elephants be brought in to trample the young boy. But the elephants stood mesmerised and would not harm him. No matter what the mahouts did to prod the elephants, they would not harm Prahlada. His utter failure to bend Prahlada to his will or to harm him in some way, angered Hiranyakashipu. He got more and more incensed and was lost to all reason. He brought in cobras to bite the boy to death. He dragged him to the top of a steep mountain and pushed him down. He threw him into the sea and left him to drown. He fed him with deadly poison. But none of this worked, and Prahlada remained steadfast, maintaining his faith in Vishnu.

"Why don't you die?" Hiranyakashipu asked his son in frustration. "What's your secret?"

Prahlada laughed and said: "There is no big secret. How can all these things harm when I recognise that Lord Vishnu is in everything? He is in the elephants, in the snakes, even in the mountains, the sea, and in the poison you fed me. He is also in you and in me. When you understand that, there will be no death."

Hiranyakashipu was enraged by Prahlada's confidence in his faith and his utter indifference to everything else. He dragged the boy by his arm and led him to the middle of the open court. All the *rakshasas* as in the court stood still with amazement and fear. In the middle of the large hall there was an iron pillar. Hiranyakashipu paid no heed to anyone. His entire attention was focussed on Prahlada and his defiance.

He stood in front of the pillar and asked Prahlada: "You traitor to the family and the race! This is my victory pillar. Tell me, is your Vishnu in this, too? Tell me! If so, I will kill that Vishnu in

this pillar for what he did to my younger brother!"

"There's no doubt," said Prahlada at once. "He's in the pillar as in everything else."

In a blind fury, Hiranyakashipu picked up his mace and struck a mighty blow at the pillar. Immediately, there was a terrible sound and the whole universe shook as the pillar broke into tiny pieces. There was a tremendous dust storm and for a few minutes nobody could see anything. And then, suddenly, with an ear-splitting roar, ■ frightening creature emerged from the pillar. It had the head of a lion and the body of a man. The creature's hands had nails and claws like those of a lion. This terrible creature stood in the middle of Hiranyakashipu's court and roared. The deafening roars echoed through the universe and all the gods and men and *asuras* and other beings cowered in their places wondering what catastrophe would happen now.

(To continue)



LAKSHMI PUJA WITH A DIFFERENCE

Orissa, earlier known as Utkal and Kalinga, was a land of innumerable temples.

The way the people of Orissa worship the deities, too, has some uniqueness about it. One example is the worship of Goddess Lakshmi. A pot (*Mana*) used for measuring rice is filled to the brim with white paddy symboling the goddess. Every Thursday, in the month of Margashira, this symbol is worshipped, after the house has been cleaned and beautiful designs are drawn on the floor in front of the house. This ritual is known as Manabasa.*

An amusing legend is associated with the great temple of Sri Jagannath at Puri. Sri Jagannath is none other than Vishnu, and Lakshmi is His consort. One Thursday morning, in Margashira, the goddess went out to see how Her devotees worshipped Her. She was

deeply impressed by the devotion of Shriya, a poor Chandal woman. As She stood in front of her house, Jagannath and His elder brother Balabhadra happened to pass by. Balabhadra was aghast to see Lakshmi standing close to a low caste woman. He insisted on Jagannath divorcing Her.

Lakshmi went out of the temple, carrying all the wealth stored there. Jagannath and Balabhadra literally starved and had to beg for food. But nobody would care to give alms to those who had been deprived of Lakshmi's Grace!

The brothers begged at the house of the Chandal where the goddess now lived. Lakshmi took pity on them and cooked the meals Herself, without revealing Herself. While eating, the two brothers guessed that none but Lakshmi could have cooked the meal. They apologized to Her and pleaded with Her to return to Her abode. The whole episode is remembered through different rituals at the temple at Puri in the month of Margashira.

** Though Diwali is marked by Lakshmi Puja in most parts of India, in Orissa Lakshmi Puja is performed during December - January.*



Tales from other lands (Sweden)

Carl had spent that whole day stacking hay into neat stacks, and came home very tired and crabby. His wife Gretchen had made a nice supper of thick potato soup and fresh bread. Even that did not improve his temper.

"Is this all? Couldn't you have a piece of chicken or lamb? You don't know how hard I have to work," Carl complained to his wife. He was a farmer. He grew corn on his farm. He also had some sheep and a few geese to take care of.

Carl felt he had to work very hard. "What do you have to do?" he asked his wife. "Just look after the baby, milk the

cow, and potter about the house! Your hands and clothes don't get dirty from the soil, or your back doesn't ache from digging and hoeing. When I come back from all this hard work, what do I find? Just plain soup and bread. Pah!"

Now Carl usually went on like that. It was his favourite grumble that Gretchen had little to do in the house, and he was never pleased with what she had done. Gretchen was very patient and would say nothing more than "It's not that simple or easy."

That day, too, Gretchen said: "It's not that easy. The baby was cranky. Any-

Who works harder?



way, this soup is good and filling."

But that night, Carl was particularly loud and critical, and he went on and on.

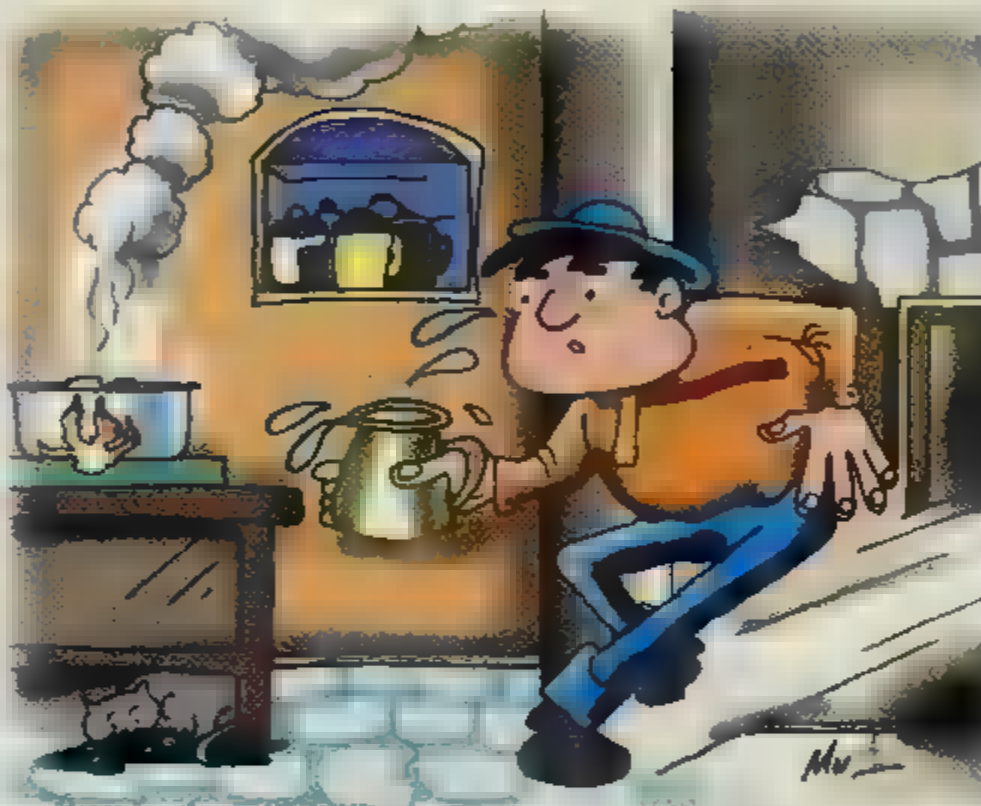
"All right, I've had enough," Gretchen said, as she spread the cloth on the table. "Let's settle this once and for all," she said, as she laid the table with bowls for their soup. "You stay at home tomorrow and I shall go out to work in the fields. We'll see who has to work harder."

She placed the soup and bread on the table. Carl was quite taken with the idea. He felt it would be as good as a holiday. After all, there was not much to do but milk the cow, look after the baby, and churn the butter. He would finish all that in the morning and take a good snooze in the afternoon. He thought, 'Gretchen doesn't know what she is in for. I'm sure she'll be home long before dinner time complaining that she can't manage.'

So the next day, Gretchen put Carl's scythe on her shoulder and went out into the fields with the men. Carl waved goodbye and thought, 'I only have to feed the baby, milk the cow, and churn the butter - plenty of time for that. Let me first have a good breakfast of sausages.' He went inside smacking his lips and set

the pan on the fire, and when the fat was smoking hot he put in the sausages. As they fried, the aroma made Carl really hungry and he thought he would like a nice cup of coffee to go with it. He looked into the milk jug and found it was empty. So he went to the dairy to get himself some milk. As he was pouring the milk out, he could smell the sausages burning. He rushed into the kitchen with the milk

jug and took the pan off the fire, but the sausages were black around the edges. He scraped the sausages rather sadly onto a plate. He knew his breakfast wouldn't be as good as usual.



To add to his troubles, he heard a loud clatter from the dairy. Only then did Carl remember that he had not replaced the lid on the milk urn nor closed the dairy door when he rushed back to the kitchen. 'Oh, that silly cat must be in the dairy,' thought Carl. Sure enough, when he rushed in to the dairy, he found the milk urn turned over and the cat lapping up all the milk. By the time he shooed off the cat, cleaned the floor, and came back to the kitchen, his breakfast was cold and the baby was crying for her milk. Poor Carl had to swallow his unappetising

breakfast, while he fed the baby.

Breakfast had taken longer than Carl had planned for, so he was late with the milking, and he still had to churn the butter and clean the house. Besides, the baby had to be given a bath and the dinner had to be cooked. Carl was surprised to see it was already midday and he still had so much work left in the house. He thought he would milk the cow and then take her out to graze. But he soon realised he could not leave the baby alone while he grazed the cow. So, he thought he would first bathe the baby and then put her to bed for a nap. The cow, however, was getting impatient. It was long past milking time, and she was hungry and thirsty. Carl decided he would take the baby with him and look after her while he milked the cow. So, he took an urn in one hand and the baby in the other and went to the cowshed. The poor cow was parched and so he watered her and then sat down to milk her. Halfway through the milking, he looked up to see if the baby was all right, and found her gone. She had crawled right out of the cowshed. He left the cow and the urn and ran out to get her back. By the time he came back, the cow had upset the urn and was bellowing to be taken out to the pasture. Poor Carl! He certainly was not finding it easy!

It was almost mid-afternoon and he hadn't really got anything done. He still had to take the cow out, bathe the baby, clean the house, and cook the dinner and yes—he had almost forgotten—he had to churn the butter before the cream went sour. After all the spilt milk, Gretchen

would be very annoyed if he allowed that to happen. Carl stood still for a minute to plan out his work.

He thought he would first collect fresh vegetables from the garden for the stew he was planning for dinner. After that, he would wipe the baby and change her clothes and then take the cow out. So he rushed to the garden and quickly gath-



ered the vegetables he wanted.

But he couldn't leave the baby alone while he took the cow to pasture! So he thought he would allow the cow to graze on the roof of the cottage. The cottage was set into the hillside and the roof was thatched with sod, pieces of clay and turf mixed with hay, for, that is how they thatched their roofs in Carl's country. A good crop of grass grew on top of the roof. So, he led the cow over the hillside to the roof to allow her to graze on the grass that grew there. He then came down to deal with the baby. Suddenly, he realised that if the cow strayed too close

to the edge of the roof she would fall to her death. So, he left the baby on the mat in the kitchen and walked up the roof, with a rope. He tied the rope around the cow and then threw the rope down the chimney. Below he tied the rope around his leg with a big knot.

'That should keep her safe,' he thought to himself as he busied himself with the baby. 'I'll also know if she strays



too much.'

He hobbled around the kitchen with the rope around his leg. With difficulty he changed the clothes and put the baby to bed. He then set a pot of water on the fireplace under the chimney and started peeling, paring, and chopping the vegetables for the stew. 'At least we'll have a good stew for dinner,' said Carl thinking of his breakfast. Suddenly, the cow

did go over the edge of the roof and she hung by the rope down the side of the house mooing and bellowing in fear. She couldn't move at all. Poor Carl! The weight of the cow almost pulled him up the chimney and he dangled there screaming and shouting, not being able to move up or down.

In the meantime, Gretchen was working hard in the fields. She wondered why Carl hadn't called her home for dinner. It was long past the time. When all the workers had gone home, Gretchen too, set off for the farm. As she came closer to the cottage, to her surprise and alarm, she saw the cow hanging by the rope down the side of the cottage mooing and bellowing mightily. She ran up the hillside and with a swing of her scythe cut the rope. The cow fell down to the ground. Luckily she was more frightened than hurt. Gretchen ran inside to see what the matter was. For, she could hear Carl screaming and shouting.

When Gretchen had cut the rope, Carl had tumbled down from the chimney into the fireplace and the stew pot on it. As she came in, Carl was just trying to get up. Gretchen ran to help him up. Carl looked sheepishly at her and said, 'It's not so easy after all.'

He looked so funny with bits of celery in his hair and carrots round his neck that they both burst out laughing. They laughed and laughed till tears streamed down their cheeks.

Gretchen was too good-natured to say, 'I told you so'. But Carl had learnt his lesson and he never complained about how hard he had to work ever again.

One fine summer's day in 1795, sixteen-year-old Daniel McGinnis was paddling his canoe across Mahone Bay in Nova Scotia, on the Atlantic coast of Canada. Not before long, he touched a peanut shaped isle called the Oak Island, as it was covered with a luxuriant growth of red oaks. The adventurous lad, beaching his little boat in the sandy inlet, wandered aimlessly into the uninhabited place.

As he explored, whistling his merry way through the woods, he suddenly stumbled into the clearing a curious, saucer-like depression in the ground. It was almost 13 ft wide, and above it hung the branch of an old old oak tree that stood close by it. Daniel observed that the branch had been deliberately cut short, and from it dangled a weather-beaten rope and pulley. He stood lost in thought. There

had been rumours of pirates once frequenting the island and burying their valuable booty there. Could this be the spot where lay a hidden treasure?

Excited, he hurried back home to the little town of Chester.

Soon he gathered his two friends, Anthony Vaughan, aged 13, and John Smith, 20, and told them about his find. The next morning found the three companions vigorously rowing to the Oak Island, equipped with picks and

shovels. Soon they reached the old oak and the circular depression in the ground. Then began, perhaps what was to prove, the most famous treasure-hunt of modern times. The trio began to dig and dig and sunk a hole more than two feet deep. Suddenly Daniel's shovel struck something solid, a floor of carefully laid flagstones. With great expectations, the boys raised the stones one by one. Alas, they found nothing but loose earth underneath. Still hopeful, they

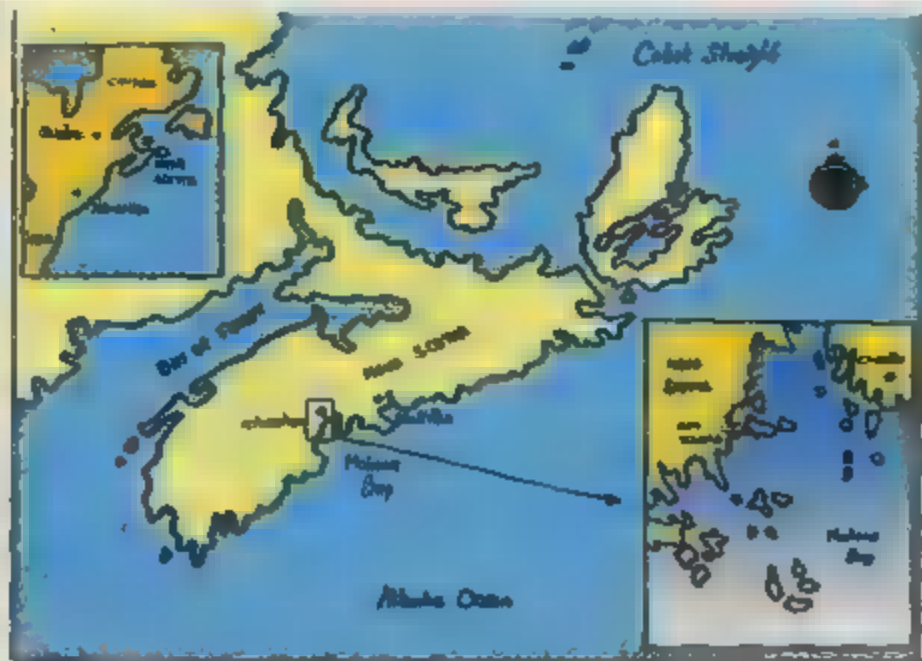
continued to dig deeper.

Ten feet down the surface they ran into a layer of oak logs spanning the pit. Further down at 20 and 30 ft they found

THE STUBBORN MONEY-PIT



UNSOLVED MYSTERIES



another layer of logs. Now the prudent boys thought that it might be dangerous to continue further down without more help and better planning. But they were convinced that nobody would have taken so much trouble to install those stuff unless he had something very valuable to hide. What could be lying at the bottom of the pit?

So the lads returned home and recounted to their parents what they had been doing all the day long. But the elders did not share their sons' enthusiasm to find the hidden treasure. They dissuaded them by warning that the abandoned island was haunted by the ghosts of pirates. They said, in the past strange lights and fires had been seen there, and a group of local people had vanished when they went to investigate them. But nothing could dampen the spirit of the three friends.

It took the patient boys eight years to find some assistance for the project. In 1803, the Onslow Company was formed for the purpose and the search began once again. The pit was dug to a

depth of 90 ft. Surprisingly, a layer of oak logs was found at intervals of every 10 ft. At 40 ft a layer of charcoal was found, at 50 ft a layer of putty, water-tight seal and at 60 ft, a layer of coconut fibre. At 90 ft was unearthed a large stone inscribed with a mysterious writing. Later, the strange markings were deciphered as : "Ten feet below are buried two million pounds."

At about 100 ft something metallic was struck and the diggers' joy knew no bounds. For, they were sure that the goal was not far. So they retired for the night with the dream that tomorrow a fortune would be theirs. But the next morning what do you think awaited them? To their utter despair, they found the pit flooded with water almost to the top. All efforts to pump out the water failed and it continued to remain at the same level. Where did the water come from?

The treasure-hunters, however, did not give up. The following year, in the spring of 1805, by the side of the original shaft, now called the "Money Pit", another one was sunk to a depth of 110 ft. From there a tunnel was run over to the old shaft in an attempt to get at the treasure. Alas, as soon as they had broken through the original pit, the new one was flooded with water. All stood bewildered, as the mystery was turning out to be intriguing day by day. Finally the project was abandoned because

everyone was exhausted and they also ran out of money.

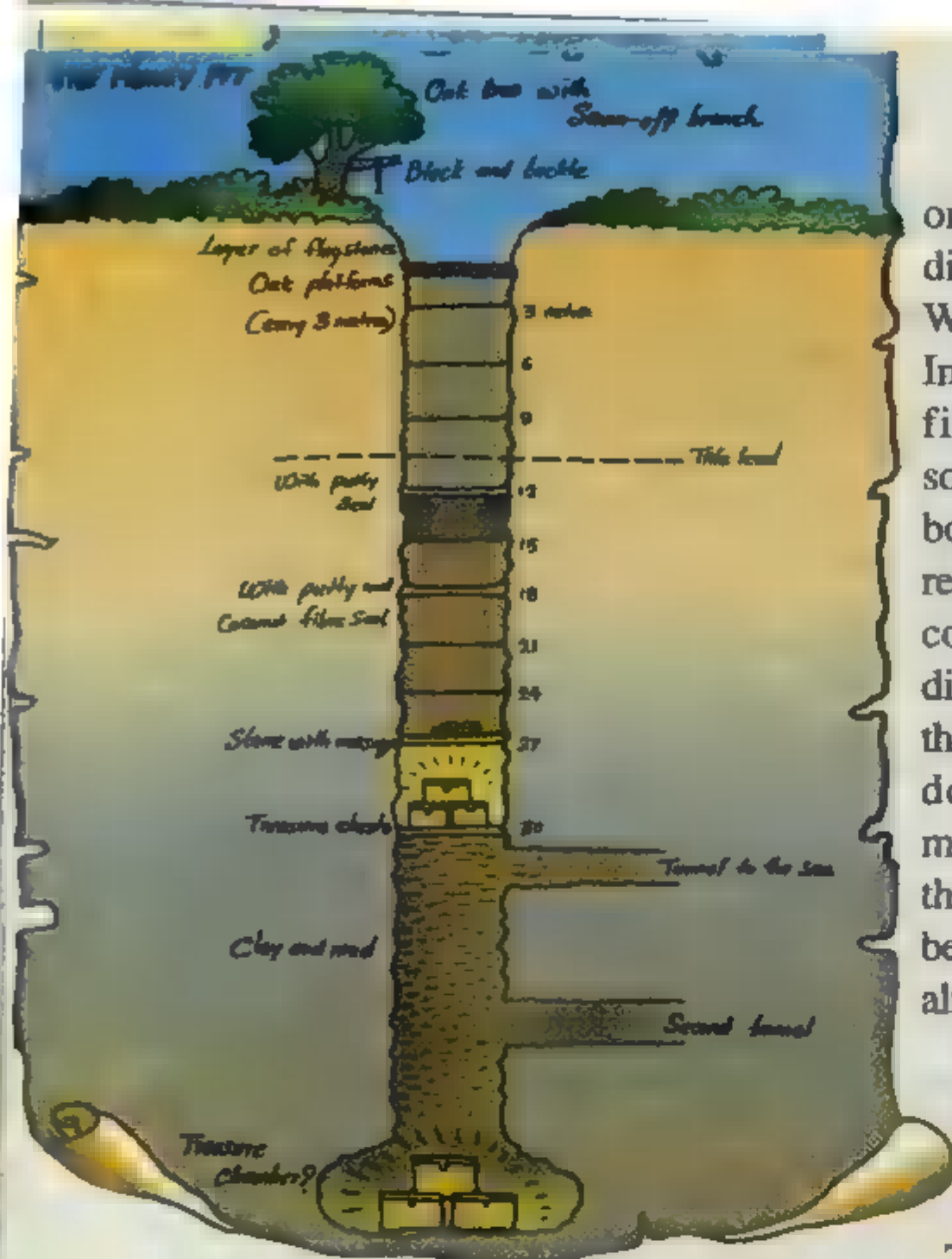
More than four decades passed. Daniel McGinnis, the discoverer of this enigma, was dead. But his two friends continued their endeavour to solve the mystery. They teamed up with a group called the Truro Syndicate and the great treasure-hunt was on once again. Five narrow holes were drilled to a depth of about 100 ft and samples brought up by them revealed that down there lay two oak chests one above the other on a layer of logs. Could these chests contain gold coins?

Encouraged by these results, a third shaft was dug and just as they tunneled into the original pit, once again the new

one got filled with water. By accident, a man fell down and gulped what tasted like salty water. Another smart individual observed that water rose and fell with the tide and concluded that there might be a tunnel connecting the pit to the sea. Further investigations revealed that at Smith's Cove, there was indeed an entrance to ■ underground channel of water that met the original pit at ■ depth of about 100 ft. Whenever the air-tight stopper made by the layer of logs was broken, water gushed into the shaft.

Eventually, a dam was constructed at Smith's Cove to stop the water from getting into the tunnel and flooding the pit. But, unfortunately, before it could be completed, a storm washed it away.





one knows where they have disappeared now. In 1995, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute surveyed the island to find out whether there is something really valuable at the bottom of the pit. Though their reports are kept confidential, the conclusions are said to be "not discouraging". Besides the pit, the rest of the island seems to be dotted with strange stone markers. The most unusual of these are boulders that seem to be laid out in the shape of a cross almost 900 ft long.

More than two hundred years have lapsed. Numerous attempts at excavation have been made by various groups.

They have all used the latest technical skills and equipment, including heavy machinery, like bulldozers and cranes. Millions of dollars have been spent, more than 20 shafts have been dug, and six men have lost their lives. Yet, the Money Pit in the Oak Island is not prepared to part with its secrets. It has remained a riddle.

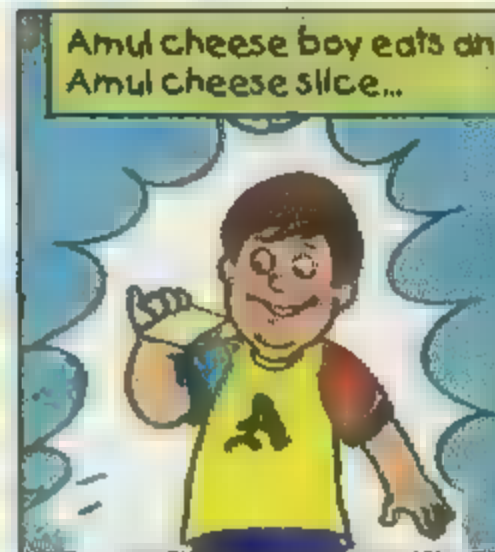
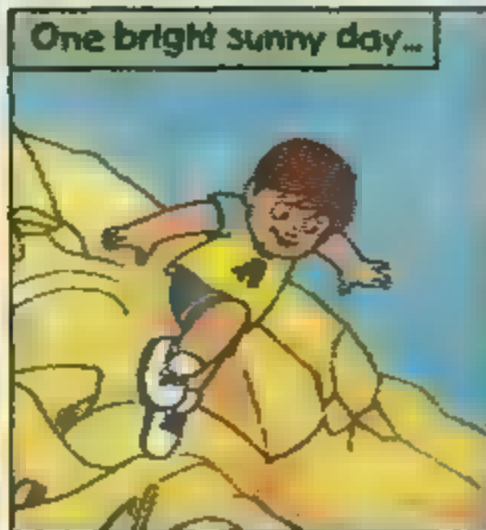
Who were its master-builders? Why did they build it? What lies in its yet unreachable bottom? Perhaps only time will reveal them to us. Or as legend has it, the mystery will be solved only when the last oak tree in the island dies. It seems two of them still stand upright.

In utter desperation, they destroyed the water tunnel with the help of dynamite. Lo! and behold, even then the water continued to gush into the pit as rapidly as ever. From where did pit come? Later, a second flood channel was discovered in the South Cove and it was presumed that there could be more.

In the recent past, a special underwater camera was lowered into the pit. It returned with some amazing images of a human hand and two oak chests. All that has been recovered from the Money Pit, since its discovery, are three small links of a gold chain. But no

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Creative Contest

Given below is the beginning of a story; it has all the ingredients of turning out to be an interesting tale. But that 'creation' is in YOUR hands! You have to imagine the sequences — possible and probable — and give a finish to the story. Not only finish it, but think up a catchy title (heading), too. Remember, you have to do this exercise in 200 to 250 words. The best entry will get an attractive prize, and the entry will also be published in the magazine. The contest is meant for our young readers. Please remember to mention your name, age, class, _____ of school, and home address with PIN Code. Prove that YOU can write better than grown-ups; so, don't take their help!

Here goes the story:

There was a wealthy landlord in Mangalapuri, Mahabala Rao by name. His son, Mohan Kumar, was a good-natured young man, and his father was keen that he took an equally good-natured girl as his bride.

Being a landlord, he had many friends. One of them, Vasudev Bhat, owned a cloth-shop. He was neither educated nor rich, but Mahabala Rao had great respect for him, because he was a man of wisdom. Whenever he had a problem, Mahabala Rao used to consult him, and whatever be the nature of the problem, Vasudev Bhat was certain to come out with a solution.

Vasudev Bhat made it a point to visit houses, especially when he received a new stock of saris. Instead of waiting for the women folk to visit his shop, he would take the saris to their homes and more often than not, he would effect a good sale. He was thus popular with the women and young

girls of the village.

"Vasudev, my friend," said Mahabala Rao one day, "I'm sure you would have come across several young girls during your visits. You must be able to recommend one of them to become my daughter-in-law."

"To tell you the truth," replied Vasudev Bhat, "I, too, had the same thought in my mind. There is Kamini, daughter of Narendradeva of Shyamnagar. There is also Devayani, daughter of Jairamdas of Malligram. Both are beautiful and I've found them clever as well."

"Of course, I do appreciate beauty and cleverness," remarked Mahabala Rao, "but I value honesty and sincerity as the best virtues. Now, between the two girls, who's more truthful and sincere?"

"Give me a week's time, my good friend," said Vasudev Bhat, "I shall find that out."

Well, how do you think Vasudev Bhat went about to find an answer to Mahabala Rao's poser? Did he succeed in making a choice? Was Mahabala Rao satisfied? Don't forget to give a title to the story; and write "Creative Contest" on top of your entry. The closing date is 25 October 2000.

- Editor

Answers to Discovery of India Quiz (September 2000) :

1. (a) Shankaracharya, (b) Ashoka, (c) Meerabai, (d) The Atharva Veda, (e) Patanjali.
2. Princess Krishnakumari of Mewar (Udaipur). The two suitors were from Marwar and Jodhpur.

Let us know



- ✱ **My friends, after a long flight, often complain of jetlag. What does ■ mean? And what ■■■■ it?**

- *Bhaskaran Nair, Alleppey*

Our wakeful time and sleeping time are normally governed by sunlight and darkness. We wake up at dawn and go to bed when it is dark, though the actual timings may vary from individual to individual. There is an almost clock-work precision to this behaviour in us. This precision gets upset during a long journey by aeroplane. As the flight is fast, one passes through different countries and have to adjust oneself to the time of day or night prevailing there. Like, you may leave India towards the west at 6 a.m. and when you land some three hours later, you still find that you have not crossed dawn! Flying in the westerly direction lengthens the traveller's day, while flying east shortens it. The effect is, the hunger pattern is upset, there is disorientation in one's body movement, and other disturbing trends. Whenever daylight prevails at ■ time different from a traveller's home time, the biological clock gets disturbed.

- ✱ **A country's defence system is augmented by using stealth aircraft. What ■■ they?**

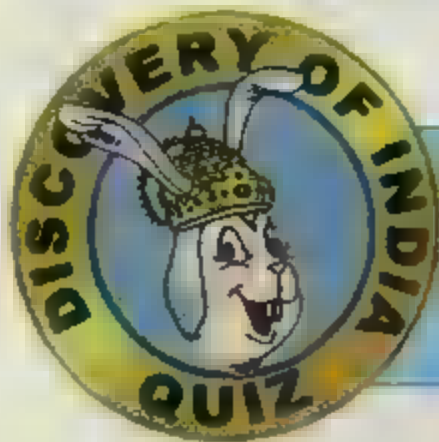
- *Nagaraj Sarma, Chandigarh*

RADAR (Radio detecting and ranging) is ■ device used for locating approaching aircraft and also ascertaining its speed. RADAR transmits radio waves and receives the same reflected by any object, say an aircraft. A stealth aircraft is coated with a special material which is capable of absorbing all the radio waves falling on it, and so does not reflect anything back. No RADAR can thus detect the presence of the aircraft, and locate its position.

- ✱ **Are not "juvenile delinquents" criminals?**

- *Kakoli Chatterjee, Calcutta*

Any behaviour in children or young people which are not in conformity with normative rules, understanding or expectations of the social system is described as juvenile delinquency. In 1960, the UN Congress on Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders defined juvenile delinquency as "commission of an act which, if committed by ■ adult, would be considered ■ crime." When someone, below the age of 16, indulges in a behaviour which may prove to be dangerous to himself and / or society, he may be called a juvenile delinquent, and not a criminal ■ we generally understand of the term.



CHANDAMAMA

ENRICH YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Answers to the quiz published in this issue will appear in the next issue. Meanwhile, try to find the answers yourself and enrich your knowledge of India's antiquity and heritage.



1. (a) Which is the shrine in the farthest north where priests from the farthest south are in charge of the worship of the deity?
- (b) Which is the Hindu shrine in the south where some rites in the Islamic style are performed for the deity in honour of ■ devotee who was a Muslim?
- (c) Which is the shrine where Lord Krishna is worshipped along with His elder brother and younger sister?
- (d) Which famous city of India was the site for the hermitage of Sage Bharadwaja?
- (e) Where is situated the cave inside which Sage Vyasa was believed to have composed the great epic *Mahabharata*?

The king had only ■ daughter. She was beautiful ■ brave. The king's well-wishers suggested that he should adopt a son, but he was sure that his daughter would prove as capable of taking care of the kingdom as an worthy son.

The princess ascended the throne after her father's death. She proved an ideal ruler. Each one of the prince of the nearby kingdoms coveted her hand in marriage as well ■ her kingdom. When she continued to reject their proposals, their combined army invaded her kingdom. The princess fought bravely and routed them. Swirling ■ dazzling sword, she rode through the enemy formations and obliged the audacious princes either to surrender or to bite the dust.

Suddenly she stopped, for the one who stood in front of her horse was not an enemy, but someone who she at once recognized as her would-be consort. They were duly married. By and by it was revealed to the people that she was none other than ■ human incarnation of the Divine Mother and her consort was none other than Lord Shiva. Both are worshipped as deities in one of the oldest temples of India.

Where is this temple? What names do the deities bear?



TOWARDS BETTER ENGLISH



Prepone is not to advance

Reader Manda Venkata Appa Rao of Berhampur, Orissa, is confused because he finds even "intellectuals using the expression 'preponement' as the opposite of postponement."

'Postpone' and 'postponement' are single words where 'post' is not a prefix joined with 'pone' or 'ponement', which are not words in the English language. Therefore, the prefix 'pre' cannot be substituted for 'post' to derive an opposite meaning. Words like 'prepone' and 'preponement' are examples of what is generally described as 'Indian English'.

Why is there a difference in spelling between "college" and "village" when the two words are pronounced alike? asks Acharya Chidbhavananda of Ananda Marga Ashram in Karim Nagar, Andhra Pradesh.

College, with the vowel 'e', and village, with the vowel 'a' are accepted words which find a place in the dictionary. However, they are not pronounced alike. Any good dictionary will indicate the way they are pronounced. Though village and collage look alike in spelling, they are pronounced very differently. Other examples are but and bud which are pronounced differently from 'put'. Did someone say, English has no logic?

What is meant by the idiom "hoisted by one's own petard"?

- Jyotiranjana Biswal, Durgapur, Orissa

When someone plans to harm someone else, and the plan results in harm for himself, it is said, he is hoisted with his own petard. Note the preposition 'with'.

What is the meaning of the expression 'nest-egg'?

- Reshmi Aggarwal, Poonch

Nest-egg (sometimes the word is spelt without a hyphen) is an amount of money that one saves for a specific purpose. See : "They squandered their little nest-egg."

What is meant by the idiom "mutton dressed as a lamb"?

- Chandravati, Pondicherry

When someone tries to look younger than he or she really is, taking care to appear especially attractive to other people, he or she is described as mutton dressed as a lamb.



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